

**INTERNATIONAL
WORKSHOP**



**universität
wien**

AND MIRRORS WIBBING:

**FROM ANTIQUITY
TO THE EARLY
MODERN PERIOD**

**FROM ANTIQUITY
TO THE EARLY
MODERN PERIOD**

**OCTOBER
6-7
2017**

**DEPARTMENT OF BYZANTINE
AND MODERN GREEK STUDIES
POSTGASSE 7/1/3
1010 VIENNA**

ORGANIZERS:

**LILIA DIAMANTOPOULOU
UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA**

**MARIA GEROLEMOU
UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS**

**SUPPORTED BY
THE AUSTRIAN SOCIETY
OF MODERN GREEK STUDIES (ÖGNS)**

**OCTOBER
6-7
2017**

**DEPARTMENT OF BYZANTINE
AND MODERN GREEK STUDIES
POSTGASSE 7/1/3
1010 VIENNA**

ORGANIZERS:

**LILIA DIAMANTOPOULOU
UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA**

**MARIA GEROLEMOU
UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS**

**SUPPORTED BY
THE AUSTRIAN SOCIETY
OF MODERN GREEK STUDIES (ÖGNS)**

Mirrors and Mirroring. From Antiquity to the Early Modern Period

Postgasse 7/3/1, Hörsaal des Instituts für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik University of Vienna

6th October, 2017

9.30-10.00 / Welcoming

10.00-10.45 Ava Shirazi (Princeton University)

The Liver and the Mirror: Visualizing Sensory Perception in Plato's "Timaeus"

Abstract:

In one of the most curious mentions of a mirror in Greek thought, Plato, in the *Timaeus*, explicitly compares the structure and function of the liver to a mirror (71a-d & 72c). The liver, as a mirror, is surface upon which Reason reflects sensory impressions for the Appetite to see and feel. These impressions are primarily visual (*eidōla*, *phantasmata*), but they are also qualified and experienced through other sensations such as touch, taste, and feelings of pain, nausea, restfulness, and even divine inspiration. To use Lorenz's (Lorenz, H. *The Brute within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford, 2006: 55) turn of phrase, the communication between reason and appetite is based on "non-rational cognition" (i.e. it is based on the senses).

The purpose of this paper is to explicate how the mirror informs the visual and other sensory experiences presented within this passage. In other words, why did Plato turn to the mirror for a device of sensory communication between reason and the appetite? At the same time, this paper will consider what this passage can tell us about the role of the mirror in Plato's visual theory more broadly.

First, I will focus on the significance of the *liver* before and during Plato's time, in particular on its significance in discourses on hepatoscopy. I argue that during Plato's times, the liver was a visual medium through which the Greeks explored the tension between the visible and the invisible. Next, I demonstrate how it is precisely this tension that the liver *as mirror* instantiates, while at the same time presenting a remarkable and novel explanation for sensory experience within the body. Here, I turn to what an actual experience with a mirror would have been like in Plato's times, and how the *Timaeus* draws upon the material complexities of Greek mirrors throughout his description of the human body. In conclusion, I argue that the mirror emerges as a key model for visualization in Plato's thought and as a producer of images par excellence.

10.45-11.30 Mikhail Silian (Humboldt Universität Berlin)

Reflection theory in Tideus' "On Mirrors"

Abstract:

The *On Mirrors* is a compendium of visual theories from Plato and Ptolemy up to Damianos, ascribed to some Tideus. The treatise, which is now only extant in Latin, was compiled at some point in Late Antiquity/Early Middle Ages, and it is probably an intermediate translation from Greek through Arabic made by Gerard of Cremona. Interestingly enough, the *On Mirrors* also presents an original theory of reflection. In

this paper, I propose to reconstruct the sequence of arguments in *On Mirrors* which are related to this reflection theory and, within this framework, to distinguish Tideus' original account from any external influences.

Tideus argues that 'seeing' and 'reflecting' require air to function as an instrument that is capable of altering some of its properties (*dispositio*). In this way, the air adjusts to the nature of the visual capacity (*visus*). Timaeus then claims that, in the act of vision, air instantly delivers a luminous form, from the object to the eye. Based on these assumptions, he elaborates on how light dispersed in air transfers the form of an object to the mirror, and, moreover, he explains how the mirror subsequently delivers this form to the eye.

It is worth noting that, although we do not know much about Tideus himself, the *On Mirrors* appears to have been well known to the medieval natural philosophers. In fact, it frequently accompanies Ptolemy's and Euclid's optical works in medieval manuscripts. Therefore, a new scholarly examination of the *On Mirrors* is highly required.

11.30-12.15 Andreou, Christiana / Portides, Dimitris (University of Cyprus)
From anthropomorphism to modern science: the case of optics

Abstract:

The basic assumption underlying the beginnings of ancient science, in the 6th century B.C., was the idea that there must be some rational explanations about the natural phenomena and that human beings can provide such explanations in the form of theories and hypotheses. This assumption led to the question of how humans come to know the external world in the first place and shaped the subsequent development of early science around the sentient man. Therefore, the hypotheses and theories about the world were described in relation to the interaction of human beings with it and especially around the senses. An anthropomorphic and anthropocentric science thus emerged.

In this paper, we will try to show that this characteristic is most prominent in the case of optics in which the study of light and its properties were investigated in relation to the process of vision. The term "optics", still in use today, in greek "optica" from *ops* = "eye", indicates that the sense organ of vision was the point of reference of this field of study in the literal sense in the study of mathematical optics and metaphorically in the physical tradition of optics. Ocular emanations like the platonic *visual current* or sentient beams like those of the Stoics, reified lines of sight, like *opsis*, similar or identical to the external light, physical states like Aristotles' *entelecheia diaphanes* that established the continuity between the external world and the eye, perceptible qualities of objects that multiply when acted upon by an imperceptible external agent, the medieval *lux* and *lumen* respectively, where some of the ideas put forward to describe light and its properties and at the same time its role in the process of visual perception. It wasn't until Keplers' explanation of vision which ignored the physiological and psychological aspects of vision that the study of light broke free from the process of vision to become, at the age of Newton, the study of an autonomous physical entity independent of the presence or even the existence of any observer. In the age of Newton the study of light became scientific in the modern sense.

Lunch break

14.00-14.45 Mireille M. Lee (University of Vanderbilt)

Replicating Reflections: An experimental approach to ancient Greek mirrors

Abstract:

This paper considers the ancient experience of mirrors and mirroring as they can be reconstructed through experimental archaeology. I am currently researching several ancient Greek mirrors in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, with the aim of replicating a mirror of the so-called caryatid type. The results of XRF (X-ray fluorescence) analysis will reveal the specific alloys of the reflective disk, figural handle, and decorative attachments. A 3-D scan of the mirror will allow me to print it in wax, which can then be cast in bronze using the *cire perdue* process. The reflective surface will be polished using mild abrasives. By reproducing the mirror using the same alloys as ancient bronze-smiths, I will be able to replicate the actual reflective surface – and recreate the experience of the ancient user.

The extant corpus of ancient Greek mirrors suggests that the ancient experience of mirrors and mirroring was quite different from our own. Mirrors of silvered glass were unknown, as were large-scale wall-mirrors. Hand-held mirrors could be up to 20 cm in diameter and weigh as much as 1.5 kilos; hence, they were somewhat cumbersome to use, as illustrated in several Hellenistic terracottas. Images on ancient Greek vases indicate that mirrors could be held by the user or an attendant, and the reflected image could be discernible to several individuals at once. Since most Greek mirrors are slightly convex, they would have produced a distorted image. The clarity of the reflection has remained a mystery until now: this experiment will allow us to see what the Greeks actually saw.

This study proposes a phenomenology of ancient Greek mirrors, and considers the various ways in which they were employed: to reflect the appearance of the individual; to see what could not otherwise be seen; as a means of prophesy.

14.45-15.30 Isabella Bonati/Nicola Reggiani (Università degli Studi di Parma)

Mirrors in the Greek papyri: question of words

Abstract:

The theme of mirrors as material objects cannot disregard the evidence provided by the Greek papyri from Egypt, because of their close proximity to everyday life, and their often-interesting testimonies about daily technology and material culture. Papyrological evidence is essentially of a linguistic type: special or technical ancient Greek words refer to a wide range of objects, techniques, and so on, and not rarely are they transfigured by linguistic variation and other socio-cultural patterns. In ancient Greek several words are used to label the ‘mirror’. They all are noun derivatives of the verb ὁράω (‘to look’) preceded by a prefix, which marks the direction of the gaze and conveys particular shades of meaning hard to translate into modern languages: εἴσοπτρον, ἔνοπτρον, δίοπτρον, and κάτοπτρον, etymologically defining reflecting objects for looking ‘into’, ‘in’, ‘through’, and ‘downwards’ respectively. The last one is the most attested in both literary and papyrological evidence, but εἴσοπτρον deserves a particular attention for its linguistic features. This word is never attested in the papyri as such, but always occurs (mostly in marriage contracts and in documents concerned with the women’s world) in phonetic variants, being spelled as either ἔσοπτρον – quite a usual variant, which is also the most attested in literature – or ὄσοπτρον. The latter, attested in the papyri only, is commonly considered as a mistake for the former, but its

frequency of occurrence and the existence of the Latin form *osyptrum* allow regarding it as an independent phonetic variant, likely typical of the language spoken in the Egyptian γόρα in the II-III cent. AD. The paper will try to contextualize the linguistic expressions of ‘mirrors’ in the Greek papyri, and a particular attention will be devoted to the issues raised by the case of ἔσοπτρον during the processes of both traditional and digital edition of the papyrus texts.

15.30-16.15 Jane Draycott (University of Glasgow)

Through a glass lightly: mirrors, lenses and artificial eyes in classical antiquity

Abstract:

A variety of different theories of vision were proposed in antiquity, some suggesting the movement of material from the eye to the object, others suggesting the movement of material from the object to the eye, others a combination, and others no movement at all but rather requisite components. Yet whatever the explanation offered for how vision worked, vision was a process frequently interrupted, if not ended entirely. Visual impairment, whether congenital or, as was more common, acquired, was rife in classical antiquity, and there were numerous potential ways one could attempt to deal with it, from medical to religious to magical. But what if none of these worked, and one had to negotiate life as someone with defective or gradually failing vision? What practical measures were available for supplementing or replacing either the sense of sight or even the eye itself?

There was a long tradition involving the use of mirrors and other reflective surfaces to illuminate or magnify images, and this paper will examine the literary, documentary and archaeological evidence that the same principles were applied to lenses and used to mitigate failing eyesight. Then it will expand the scope and consider the extent to which the same principles were applied to artificial eyes used as cosmetic rather than functional prostheses. According to Dio Chrysostom, diamond and malachite were favoured for artificial eyes, yet Martial considered them to be pointless since they could not restore either the lost organ or the sense of sight. While it arguably makes sense to utilise mirrors and reflective surfaces as a means of improving defective or failing vision, whether illuminating or magnifying an object as required, why were the same or similar substances utilised in artificial eyes? Ultimately, this paper will assess the extent to which theories of vision influenced not just visual aids but also visual prostheses in classical antiquity.

Coffee break

17.00-17.45 Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis (University of St. Andrews)
Mirrors as votive dedications in Classical and Hellenistic Greece: embodied interactions and cultural meanings

Abstract:

This paper is concerned with mirrors offered as votives in sanctuaries in the Greek world in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. It uses archaeological, epigraphical and literary evidence to establish the nature and extent of the practice of dedicating mirrors, including the manner of display in sanctuaries. A brief look at the typology, material, design and iconography of mirrors (hand held and free standing), is followed by an embodied reading of mirrors as objects which interacted with human bodies (particularly with hands, faces and eyes) in haptic and visual ways both pre and post dedication. The relationship of the reflected, animated image to the material body is explored. ‘Thing theory’ (Bill Brown) is used to interpret mirrors as agentic objects producing new bodies in their reflections. The meaning of mirror dedications is also explored through dedicatory epigrams, while the broader cultural discourse on mirrors (not specifically votive) is brought into play through the analysis of red-figure vases and sculptural reliefs depicting mirrors in use. Here the interpretation draws on vestimentary theories, the concept of body modification and the extension of the body through tools and prostheses. The significance of votive mirrors is thus explored through evidence specific to sanctuary contexts and also through the broader cultural imaginary, using both literary and visual evidence.

18.30-19.15 Tatiana Bur (Cambridge University)
Mirrors and the Manufacture of Religious Aura in Hellenistic Greece

Abstract:

Mirrors were part of the religious materiality of ancient Greece: they were used in rituals of divination, incorporated into temple architecture and routinely dedicated as votive objects. The implication is that the technology of reflection was thought to aid the interaction between the human and divine: how did this work? What was specific about reflection that enabled its embodied objects to act as materials which bridged the sacred and the profane? How was this harnessed in ancient religion and specifically in Hellenistic Greece?

My answer to these questions begins by integrating the under-studied technical manuals on reflection (*catoptrics*) by Euclid, Pseudo-Hero and, later, by Ptolemy. These texts offer unique insights into the ancient view of mirrors (their invention, construction, workings) and thus clues about the place of geometrical optics in Hellenistic sacred contexts. In their discussion of combinations of three types of reflective surfaces (concave, convex and plane), catoptric treatises betray an interest in creating and making sense of optical illusion. Pseudo-Hero clearly tells us that such illusion provoked wonder in the spectator (Ps-Hero, *Cat.* 2.4).

Drawing on social anthropologist Alfred Gell’s theory of objects as social agents and the potential of technologies to create enchantment (1988; 1992; 1998), I emphasise how the technology of reflection outlined above worked in the sanctuary to create what we might call ‘religious aura’. This ‘aura’ could constitute a full-blown prophecy, the creation of a more subtle epiphany of the god, or even a simple cognitive nudge that then creates a cascade of theological assumptions from a single technological effect. It was less the shininess of the bronze, the clarity of reflection, or the paradox of presence

and absence that made mirrors successful in a cultic context than it was the physiologies and inferences of optical illusion.

19.15-20.00 Jan Ciglencečki / Borut Škodlar (University of Ljubljana)

Prayer is the Monk's Mirror (John of the Ladder): Reflections and Mirror-Images in the Desert Fathers and Byzantine Monasticism

Abstract:

In the tradition of Egyptian desert fathers and Byzantine monasticism the mirror-images often appear as an orientation on the monk's spiritual path. In the monastic literature we find diverse representations of the mirror. In the *Apophthegmata patrum*, it is represented in the form of the desert, meanwhile John of the Ladder sees it in the form of the prayer. The mirror-images can disclose either fundamental layers of human being or one's distractions through emotions, sensations, feelings and thoughts. It means that a monk can see in the mirror either his God-like nature or his demons.

This paper explores the role of reflections in the methods and techniques, practiced by the monks in order to quiet their minds and see their true nature, which is experienced as inner stillness and understood as a direct reflection of God. In this vein, the monk himself becomes a mirror-image of God. Additionally, the paper explores the ways in which the distortions of mirror-images were recognized by the monks as obstacles on their path, i.e. as their demons, temptations and evil thoughts.

The paper thus examines the role of the prayer and of the desert as mirrors in the attainment of the panoramic view of monks' psychological landscapes on their path to the union with God's reflection within.

Dinner

7th October, 2017

10.00-10.45 Katerina Ierodiakonou (University of Athens)
The Aristotelian position on the ontology of mirror images

Abstract:

If nobody is in the bathroom, is the red towel reflected in the mirror? Or, is it only when somebody is in front of the mirror that the red towel is reflected in it? And what does somebody look at, when looking at the red towel on the surface of the mirror? Is it the red towel itself, or is it some kind of appearance of the red towel?

Aristotle says little about mirror images apart from few remarks, mainly in his *Meteorology*; he seems to claim that what we see by reflection is actually the object of perception, not an appearance. Alexander of Aphrodisias, on the other hand, develops a theory of mirroring, which does not simply suggest that what we see in mirrors are the objects themselves but dimly. In his commentary on Aristotle's treatise *On Sense Perception* as well as in his own treatise *On the Soul* and its *Supplement (Mantissa)*, Alexander compares mirror images to colours: both mirror images and colours are not due to a change on the surface of the mirror or in the medium of perception, respectively; rather, they are said to arise from a particular sort of relation between the perceiver, the perceived object and the surface of the mirror or the medium of perception.

But if mirroring is understood as gaining a relational property, does this mean that the image in the mirror should be interpreted, according to Alexander, as a mere appearance? This is the central question raised in my paper, which has generally been neglected. For although the Aristotelian position on how we see things in mirrors has received some scholarly attention, there is hardly anything on the related issue concerning the reality of mirror images or, to use standard philosophical jargon, their ontological status.

10.45-11.30 George Kazantzidis (University of Patras)

*The Menstruant's Gaze:
Mirrors, Women and Dim Reflections in Aristotle and Pliny the Elder*

Abstract:

The most striking description of the effects of menstruation in antiquity is found in a disputed passage in Aristotle's essay on dreams, where the imperfect vision of the person dreaming is compared to a woman's gaze corrupted by menstruation: 'In the case of very bright mirrors, when women during their menstrual periods look into them, the surface of the mirror becomes a sort of bloodshot cloud; and if the mirror is new, it is not easy to wipe off such stain, while if it is old it is easier' (Arist. *De somn.* 459b28-30). Menstruation, according to Aristotle, causes a disturbance in the quality of the blood in the uterus and, since there are pathways in the female body connecting the uterus directly with the eyes, it also affects – in a very literal and biological sense – the way a woman sees things. Relying on a conventional theory of projectile vision, the author explains that such impure matter does not contain itself in the eyes but eventually finds its way out of the body, defiling all surrounding objects: 'When the menstrual discharges occur because of a disturbance and bloody inflammation, the change in the eyes is not evident to us although it is present ... And the air is *moved* by them, and has a certain effect on the air on the surface of the mirror which is continuous with it, i.e. it

makes that air affected in the same way that it is itself; and the air on the mirror affects the surface of the mirror' (460a6-11). In Aristotle's understanding, menstruation obstructs vision in two ways: on the one hand, by affecting a woman's eyes - her power to see and perceive the world clearly; on the other hand, by obscuring the surface of the only object that could offer a precise image of herself, thus incapacitating self-perception as well.

The aim of this paper is to illustrate that menstruation is a threat to female sexuality primarily because it makes it hard to *look at* a woman as an aesthetically valued object. Scholarship so far has focused on the polluting properties of menstrual blood, and how this makes women less desirable to men. While in this case, however, blood prevents the female from 'being seen' (by others) as sexually attractive, Aristotle's mirror-passage adds a new dimension: menstruation, a defining element of female biology, is described by the philosopher to deprive *women themselves* of the ability to see their reflection in a mirror – an object with profound aesthetic associations, which serves as the material *par excellence* on which physical beauty is projected. As I will argue, in order to fully appreciate the threat posed by menstruation to aesthetic self-awareness, one needs to read Aristotle side by side with Pliny the Elder. Pliny expresses his distaste on the matter in graphic detail: 'nothing may easily be found in nature more monstrous than the flux of women (*HN* 7.64); even women themselves, usually 'immune to their own evil', can be forced to abort by a smear of menstrual blood (28.80). Menstrual blood is 'obscene' (*obsceno cruore*) – a word that indicates impurity as well as darkness: it stains linens black, it dulls barbers' razors, it tarnishes bronze and gives it a bad smell; and it can, of course, obscure the surface of a mirror. But Pliny, unlike Aristotle, has a remedy in reserve: mirrors that have been dulled by the glance of a menstruating woman can recover their shine by having the woman change her position and look at the back of the mirror (*specula ... aversa rursus contuentibus*, 28.82). The only way, in other words, that the stained object can recover its original brightness is that the woman's mirror-image should disappear entirely from its surface: while originally causing a liminal state of dim reflection, menstruation can thus be seen to culminate in a process of complete visual obliteration during which the female body is fully erased and ceases to be part of the picture.

11.30-12.15 Daniel Markovic (University of Cincinnati)
Capturing the Invisible: The Mirror of Nature

Abstract:

Greek and Latin words for mirror (κάτοπτρον, ἔνοπτρον, ἔξοπτρον; *speculum*) are formed from roots that denote vision and visibility. Unlike in English and French, where the respective words for mirror are derived from a remote Latin root, this etymology is strongly felt in Greek and Latin. Both languages often use the word in a way that points directly to the process of seeing or understanding, and Greek and Latin authors often conceptualize mirrors as tools or instruments for seeing the invisible (perhaps comparable to modern instruments such as microscopes and telescopes). This paper examines some instances in Greek and Latin texts in which the image of mirror conveys primarily the idea of visibility and focus on the cognitive aspect of vision. My main examples come from philosophical texts (for example Lucr. 3.974, Cic. *Fin.* 2.32.1-13 and 5.61.1-10, Plut. *Moral.* 967d8), but I also discuss passages from historiography (for example Pol. *Hist.* 15.20.4), and one interesting title of a scientific work (the *Mirror* of Eudoxus of Cnidus).

Lunch break

14.00-14.45 Myrto Garani (University of Athens)

Derideantur nunc philosophi quod de speculi natura disserant” (*Sen. Nat. Quaest. 1.17.1*): *Catoptrics in Lucretius’ DRN (4.269-323) and Seneca*

Abstract:

In the last chapter of his *Naturales Quaestiones* 1, Seneca claims that, even if philosophers are ridiculed, because they rant about the nature of mirrors and reflections, there is no way that nature made such a gift of hard work just for the sake of luxury (*Nat. Quaest. 1.17.1 Derideantur nunc philosophi quod de speculi natura disserant* [...] *in nulla re illa luxuriae negotium concessit*). In my paper I intend to explore and compare the Epicurean and Stoic approaches to catoptrics, in the way that these can be tracked down within Lucretius’ and Seneca’s works (especially his *Naturales Quaestiones*).

In the first part, I will discuss various aspects of Lucretius’ mechanics of mirrors (*DRN* 4.269-323), a passage which forms part of his account of perception and sensation. Whereas mirrors can be used to prove the existence of unseen images, the so-called effluences which are emitted from all objects (*DRN* 4.98-109; cf. Diogenes of Oenoanda fr. 9 Smith; Apul. *apol.* xv), at the same time they need further analogies to explain their own intricate mechanics. Bearing also in mind that for the Epicureans mirrors themselves don’t lead to a deceptive view of reality, I will first focus on two passages, which in my opinion reflect the Epicurean analogical method of magnifying and unveiling the unseen. Lucretius’ explanation of why images appear on the other side of the mirror as if mirrors have depth, by drawing a comparison with a man within a house who looks through an open door (*DRN* 4.269-91; cf. Sharples 2002), can be considered to be a metaphor of the Epicurean imaginative window into the unseen world of atoms (McCarty 1989 170). Along the same lines, Lucretius’ description of how things hidden within a house can be made visible by multiple reflections (*DRN* 4.302-10) recalls earlier discussion about the progressive knowledge of the unseen (*DRN* 1.1114-1117), as well as the metaphor of light and darkness, associated with the notion of initiation (Garani 2007). Resembling Theseus who escaped from the mythological Cretan labyrinth, Lucretius suggests that one can find ways to decipher the convoluted secrets of nature, provided that he grasps the natural laws. In connection with this passage, I will also explore Hero’s of Alexandria *Catoptrica* (a 1st cent. A.D. treatise, known only through a 13th cent. Latin translation of an abridgment; cf. Jones 2001), the second part of which deals with instructions about constructing mirrors with useful or entertaining purposes (cf. especially Hero’s description of devices for tracking foot-traffic on a street from within a closed building) (Tybjerg 2003). In the same way as in Lucretius, the emphasis in Hero’s account is laid upon the idea that knowledge of the principles of optics is what will prevent the investigator from suspension of judgment (Lloyd 1982).

In connection with Lucretius’ discussion of “walking images” (*simulacra*, *DRN* 4.318-323) (Algra 1999), I will argue that Lucretius objects to superstitions associated with mirrors as well as the common practice of catoptromancy (or enoptromancy), i.e. divination by gazing images reflected into a mirror or another shining surface, in order to utter oracles or to perceive divine visions so as to gain vision of the future and the unknown (cf. e.g. Pausanias 7.21.11-12 with Addey 2007). Lucretius suggests that by

no means should mirrors be associated with shadows of the dead and ghosts. In other words, while mirrors have nothing to do with what Taylor (2007, 7) calls “soul-catcher”, “portal to the dead” or “an oracular window on the future”, they should rather be considered as channels to the unseen.

In the second part I will turn more briefly to Seneca’s *Naturales Quaestiones* Book 1. In connection with his discussion about rainbows, Seneca refers to differing opinions about mirrors (Sen. *NQ* 1.5.1, 1.12.1; Aët. *De plac.* 2.894; cf. Sen. *Epist.* 88.27 = Posidonius fr. 90 E-K.). Towards the end of the book (*Nat. Quaest.* 1.16.1-6), the philosopher describes Hostius Quadra’s habit to have mirrors in his bedroom, so as to magnify and produce multiple images of his sexual acts (Leitão, 1998; Bartsch 2006, Williams 2012). As I will show, for Seneca, mirrors should be used as tools for self-knowledge and self-improvement through gaze (*Nat. Quaest.* 17.4).

14.45-15.30 Jeff Ulrich (University of Pennsylvania)

The Mirror, Narrative, and Erotic Desire in Apuleius’ Metamorphoses

Abstract:

The gaze and the role of viewing in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* have been useful theoretical models for understanding how Lucius progresses through his bewildering journey (Slater (1998)). In *Metamorphoses* 2.4, the ‘curious gaze’ (*curiosus optutus*) of Apuleius’ Actaeon has been seen as a didactic *exemplum* for Lucius, who should recognize himself in the voyeuristic statue but fails to interpret the spectacle (Heath (1992)). In this paper, I will offer a new interpretation of Lucius’ *ekphrasis* of the Diana-Actaeon statuery scene in *Metamorphoses* 2.4 by focusing on the role of the mirror. The mirroring water in the ensemble creates for Lucius an erotic encounter precisely because of its ability to register change over time and tell a narrative. Through the mirror, Apuleius inspires curiosity and erotic desire in the reader, thereby forcing him or her into a philosophical choice moment.

I begin the paper with an analysis of Apuleius’ *laus speculi* in the *Apologia* 14, where Apuleius eulogizes the representational benefits of the mirror. In this passage, he explains how the mirror surpasses other forms of representation in its fidelity to reality because it registers motion. The mirror is a valuable medium because it is a means to control narrative.

Using this framework from Apuleius’ *Apologia*, I turn to the famous *ekphrasis* scene in the *Met.* I demonstrate how static, motionless statues are given a narrative form in the rippling, mirroring water beneath Diana’s feet. What begins as a traditional *ekphrasis* is transformed into a dynamic narrative retelling of the myth of Diana and Actaeon at the moment when Lucius gazes into the mirror. In fact, the *simulacrum Actaeon* only appears in the scene when Lucius sees his reflection, and then the statue comes to life. Just as Lucius substitutes himself for Actaeon and plays the role of a voyeur from the safe distance of the mirror, so also, the reader is implicated in his or her voyeuristic encounter with this text. Apuleius, invoking the philosophical mirror of the text metaphor, ultimately compels the reader into a moment of self-reflection through the erotic pleasure from this catoptric encounter.

15.30-16.15 Anastasia Tsapanidou (University of Thessaloniki)
Mirrors in 19th century Modern Greek prose fiction.
“The King of Hades” (Constantinople, 1882)

Abstract:

In 19th century Modern Greek life the most common written word that means “mirror” is “katoptron”. It is well-known that during this period katoptron as a material object still indicates luxury and welfare. When Stefanos Xenos writes his rapport for London’s Great Exhibition (1851), he points “katoptra”, mirrors, as the third noteworthy object of the World’s Fair (after beds and chairs) and he describes their complicated manufacture and luxury in detail. Many Modern Greek writers of 19th century, just like their colleagues in Europe, use the “katoptron” as a means of mirroring in metaphorical and symbolic ways: it mirrors the body but reflects the soul, it tells truths or lies, it reveals the future or the past, it provokes feelings and emotions, joy or despair, self-complacency or remorse. A widespread use of the katoptron during the same period equals the mirror with a means that provides a wide periscopic or panoramic point of view, a full inspection of an issue discussed by the writer; for example, *Katoptron* can be called an essay on the Greek bandits or on the Cretan revolutionary beliefs or on the Greek political reactions to the Congress of Berlin (1878). But it appears that the wider spread has the use of the katoptron/mirror as a synonym of a profound (and meant to be scientific) research on the social and individual morality.

Some of the above mentioned meanings of katoptron can be found in the three-volume Modern Greek novel published in Constantinople in 1882 with the title *The King of Hades (Ο Βασιλεύς του Άδου)*, written by Constantinos Megarefs (Κωνσταντίνος Μεγαρέφς) and obviously inspired by the famous *Alexandre Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo (1844)*. The proposed paper examines at first the role of the mirror in this novel in the context of some of the above mentioned meanings. Then it focuses on a very special use of the mirror as a secret key-mechanism and invisible door/passage which leads to an underground space used for escape, hiding and punishment, and it discusses this particular use of the mirror as a constructive element of the popular novel.

Coffee Break

17.00-17.45 Efthymia Priki (University of Cyprus)
Mirrors and Mirroring in Dreams: Self-reflection and Liminality
in the Roman de la Rose and in the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili

Abstract:

In the thirteenth-century *Roman de la Rose* and the fifteenth-century *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, a first-person narrator recounts an oneiric experience involving an initiation into the mysteries of love. This initiation is presented as a spatial progress towards the gods of love and towards the object of desire that is achieved through a series of threshold crossings, ritual gestures and instructive sessions. The dream frame of these first-person narratives has several implications on the use and function of space therein. Dream spaces and spatial objects can be designed to be as fluid and mutable as the dreamers’ minds. Their *ekphrastic* descriptions express the subjective experience of an ever-changing and ever-expanding liminal space, which is intricately connected with the psychological state of the dreamers-narrators – a state which, just as the dream

spaces, is constructed by the author. The liminality and subjectivity inherent in these dream spaces is particularly evident when the dreamer is confronted with mirrors and other reflective surfaces. In both texts, such spatial elements and artefacts may function as thresholds, particularly when accompanied with acts of self-reflection, often facilitating those transitions in the initiation process that carry the most tension and contradiction, because of their association with the realization of the dreamer's identity. In this paper, I will examine the use and function of mirrors and of other reflective surfaces in the two texts, focusing on their significance in the narrative and spatial structure of the dreams. Particular emphasis will be given on two crucial moments of the dreamers' initiations, namely, Amant's encounter with the fountain of Narcissus in the *Rose* and Poliphilo's exploration of the triumphal portal in the *Hypnerotomachia*, discussing the disruptive effects of self-reflection, as well as the illusory and transformative effects of such reflective surfaces on the dreamers' visual, or rather mental, perception of the dream space.

17.45-18.30 Loreto Casanueva Reyes (Universidad de Chile)

Portable love: ivory mirror cases under the lens of Courtly Love

Abstract:

Ivory mirror cases were very relevant objects of Middle Ages's material culture, particularly in the first half of fourteenth century, because of its rise after Crusades, when the use of cosmetics was reintroduced from Byzantium. This rise was also related with its high array of symbolisms (like vanity, purity or fidelity), especially under the lens of *courtly love*: mirrors were not just for preening oneself, they were feminine garments and love tokens. These artifacts were portable objects, a very important virtue if we consider that women's *toilette* as an interior space for beauty was a modern invention: mirrors were suspended from a lady's belt as jewelry, or inside a purse suspended of it too (Rebold, Sand), so she could look her own face and sculpted her image whenever she were, very conscious of the sensuality of the courting process (Sand). Generally, mirrors were exquisite love tokens too, as Andreas Capellanus noted in *De Amore* and Jean de Meun pointed out in *Le Mirouer aus Amoureux*: that is, portable metonymies of the male suitor and reminders of his love. The amorous and seductive character of these objects were reinforced by the images carved on the ivory front, like *courtoisie* scenes -lovers playing chess, hunting or embracing- or chivalric literary sources -Tristan and Isolde. This paper will look at a selection of French ivory mirror cases (Walters Art Museum; Museum Mayer van den Bergh; The Metropolitan Museum of Art) and discuss their uses and symbolisms under the *courtly love* code: garments, narrative surfaces and especially portable love tokens. Finally, I'll discuss about ivory as a suitable material for portable love objects like mirror cases because, as Rebold points out, "the diminutive size inviting close scrutiny of the subject depicted, thereby aiding personal contemplation and reflection" (100).

Abstract:

The myth of Narcissus, the young beautiful boy that falls in love with its own reflection, is very well known from Ovidius' *Metamorphoses* (BKIII: 339, 358, 359, 401, 402, 436, 437, 473, 474, 510). What is perhaps less known is a very important prophecy that precedes the unfolding of his story: in BKIII: 339, when Narcissus' mother, the Naid Liriope, asks the famous seer Tiresias regarding the longevity of her son's life, he gives her the following answer: 'si se non noverit' (if he does not discover himself). This use of the verb *nosco*, which could be interpreted as a process of knowing ones self, opens the myth to a different interpretation than the one that has been dominant in its portrayal (see for example Caravvagianos' 1595 *Narcissus*).

If we accept Tiresias' prophesy as a hypothesis of something that is (im)possible (not) to happen, then, the recognition that takes place later in the lake it is an unavoidable one and opens the text to a lacanian reading. The lake, as a mirror, becomes the intellectual liminal space in which Narcissus not only discovers himself but also falls in love himself. This emphasis on sameness (a man falling in love with a man) but also of otherness, since the distorted mirror image of himself, the *gestalt* of the perception of his self (what Lacan would call as a the *ideal I*), concretises a duality between his sense of being and the societal definition of the being is or should be, makes it a story both about the self and the other.

When read as such, the mirror stage, inhabits a space that demonstrates distance from ones self while insinuating the possibility of questioning its self's reflection against the 'normal' and against societal definitions of identity. For these reasons, the myth of Narcissus has been a recurrent motif in literary texts dealing with the emergence of identity and of homosexuality (see for example Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *De Profundis*; C. P. Cavafy's 'Iasis' tomb' and 'From the drawer'; Napoleon Lapathiotis' *Narcissus* etc.).

This paper aims to read these texts, among others, in an effort to re-contextualise the use of the figure of Narcissus and the trope of the mirror, in decadent literature not only as a code for homosexuality, which was primarily used as a means to conceal it from Victorian censorship, but also as a liminal space and as a rite of passage in discovering and accepting the homosexual self.

S

19.15-19.30 / Workshop conclusion