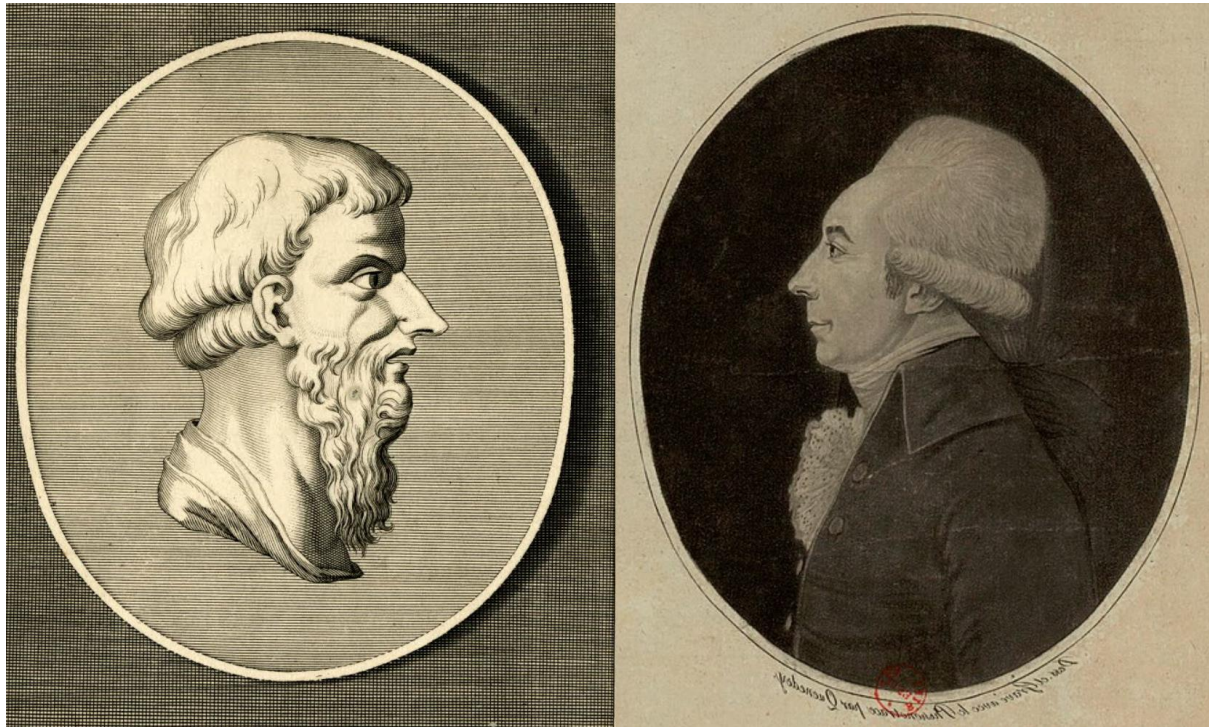


The Legend of Anacharsis in Antiquity and Modernity

University of Liverpool, 10-11 June 2021 (online, via Zoom)



Synopsis

The conference centres upon the figure of Anacharsis, a Scythian philosopher travelling around the Greek world during the age of Solon's reforms, killed for adopting alien (Greek) religious practices upon his return to Scythia and pursuing too strong an interest in alterity. His peripatetic presence combined with his penchant for intellectual exploration and questioning of 'otherness' will soon make Anacharsis a paradigm of enlightened independence. His legend was revived in the age of the Enlightenment, when his philosophy returned to intellectual discourse as an agent of dissonance and rupture fostering an emergent cultural relativism and cosmopolitanism. Today, Anacharsis helps us understand how ancient and modern reacted to religious conflicts, cultural diversity and political transformation.

The project as whole addresses issues of great relevance to our contemporary world, such as the perceived threat to cultural and national identities, and the successes and failures of cross-cultural interaction. In a period in which these issues permeate our politics, Anacharsis continues to offer insights into the current modalities of dialogue and mediation between 'us' and 'them', and our own fragile sense of national or post-national belonging. The conference brings together different branches within Classical Studies (Greek literature in particular, with specific focus on Hellenistic and Imperial philosophy and rhetoric), but creates also important synergies between Classics and Modern Philosophy and Political Theory.

Programme

10 June 2020 (*Ancient Anacharsis*)

14:15 - 14:20 **Bruce Gibson** (Head of ACE Dept., Liverpool): Welcome Address

14:20 - 14:50 **Marco Perale** (Liverpool) – Introduction: *Anacharsis and Scyles in Herodotus*

14:50 - 15:30 **Ben Cartlidge** (Christ Church, Oxford) - *Anacharsis and Foreign Wisdom in New Comedy*

15:30 - 16:10 **Marco Perale** (Liverpool) - *Diogenes Laertius' Epitaph for Anacharsis*

16:10 - 16:40 BREAK

16:40 - 17:20 **Alia Rodrigues** (Coimbra) - *Wiser Than Solon: On Anacharsis's Laugh In Plutarch (Sol. 5.1)*

17:20 - 18:00 **Bryant Kirkland** (UCLA) - *Anacharsis in the Imperial Greek Imagination*

11 June 2020 (*Modern Anacharsis*)

9:30 - 10:10 **Ian Macgregor Morris** (Salzburg) - *The Outsider Within*

10:10 - 10:50 **Victoria Rwabeh** (Kew House School/UCL) - *Philosophers on Tour. Cosmopolitanism and Legacy in Barthelemy's Voyages de Jeune Anacharsis*

10:50 - 11:20 BREAK

11:20 - 12:00 **Peter Langford** (Edge Hill) - *Revolution within the Revolution: The Cosmopolitical Project of Anacharsis Cloots*

12:00 - 12:40 **Erica Joy Mannucci** (Milano Bicocca) - *Anacharsis in the French Revolution: a Case-Study on Sylvain Maréchal*

12:40 - 14:00 LUNCH BREAK

14:00 - 14:40 **Aurelio Principato** (Roma Tre) - *Anacharsis in Chateaubriand's Essai sur les révolutions (1797)*

14:40 - 15:20 **Alexei Zadorozhny** (Liverpool) - *The Russian Anacharsis: Nikolai Karamzin*

15:20 - 15:30 Marco Perale & Peter Langford - Concluding Remarks

Abstracts

Ben Cartlidge (Christ Church, Oxford) - *Anacharsis and foreign wisdom in New Comedy*

Menander fr. 835 K.-A. ends 'was not Anacharsis a Scythian?' Anacharsis is perhaps the grandest of a roll-call of wise foreigners in Menander - Daos the Phrygian slave of the *Aspis* is another example. This paper examines fr. 835 in the context of Menander's dramatic output and New Comedy more generally to consider the probable function of this fragment; the role of wise foreigners in New Comedy; and the specific attractions of Anacharsis to the speaker's argument.

Marco Perale (Liverpool) - *Diogenes Laertius' epitaph for Anacharsis*

Herodotus portrays the Scythian Anacharsis as an avid traveller, sailing to Hellas through the Hellespont, and gaining wisdom as a result of his ability to contemplate the world beyond Scythia. In Diogenes Laertius, he is a completely different character; he is suspicious of ships as means of transport, regards sailors as voyaging dangerously and unnecessarily between life and death, and is presented as the inventor of the anchor 'for the needs of life'. In apparent contradiction with Anacharsis' declared reluctance to travel, Diogenes' account of Anacharsis' life includes an epigrammatic epitaph of his own making in which the Scythian is said to have 'roamed widely' (πολλὰ πλανηθείς) before returning to his country. However, when the epigram was copied onto the Palatine manuscript of the *Greek Anthology*, the copyist replaced πολλὰ πλανηθείς with πολλὰ μογήσας 'having suffered greatly', borrowing a Homeric expression and ironically reversing ancient etymologies of Anacharsis' name (connected in Antiquity with χάρις (grace) or χαρά (joy)). The Palatine reading suggests a view of Anacharsis as 'sufferer' which does not seem to accord with any ancient portrayal of the sage, but may allude to the toils experienced by Odysseus during his *nostos* (cf. Diogenes' ἐς Σκυθίην Ἀνάχαρσις ὅτ' ἦλυθε, πολλὰ μογήσας with *Odyssey* 19.483-44 νῦν δ' ἄλγεα πολλὰ μογήσας / ἦλυθον ... ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν). The paper will investigate the reasons behind the choice of either reading, researching Diogenes' sources (including Cynic material) and providing a stylistic commentary to Diogenes' epitaph for Anacharsis.

Alia Rodrigues (Coimbra) – *Wiser Than Solon: On Anacharsis's Laugh In Plutarch (Sol. 5.1)*

It is well-known that Plutarch valued Greek traditions of thought, education and politics above all others, and believed that it was once incumbent upon the Greeks to act as pedagogues to the so-called 'barbarians' or 'timeless' populations of Asia. In Plutarch's scheme, Anacharsis—a Scythian by birth—is the only exception to this paradigm. The interaction between Solon and Anacharsis occurs twice in Plutarch's work: in the *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* and in the *Life of Solon*. In both instances, Anacharsis outshines the sages of his day by providing the best political advice (*Sol.* 5.1) and by making cutting observations about Greek political practices (e.g. *Sol.* 5.6 or *Conv. sept. sap.* 156a). In this paper, I will focus on a particular account in the *Life of Solon* (5.1), according to which Anacharsis laughs at Solon's idealism when the latter announces his intention to use written laws to change people's behaviour and encourage a more just society.

I will argue that the occurrence of this episode in the *Life* not only foreshadows the failings of the Solon's reforms but was also an intentional narrative device used by Plutarch to characterise the lawmaker as an uncharismatic politician who missed the opportunity to implement truly radical change. In doing so, Plutarch contrasts Solon's failures with the successes of Lycurgus, whose political legacy was still tangible in his lifetime.

Bryant Kirkland (UCLA) - *Anacharsis in the Imperial Greek Imagination*

Although the figure of Anacharsis appears in Classical Greek and Hellenistic sources (esp. Herodotus, and fragmentarily in Ephorus), it is in Greek literature of the Roman Empire (1st and 2nd centuries CE) that Anacharsis achieves relatively robust representation. This paper asks why the figure of Anacharsis proved useful to Imperial Greeks in their creative adaptation of his legend. I compare the role of Anacharsis in two authors (Plutarch of Chaeronea and Lucian of Samosata) to suggest some ways in which his depiction differs from prior versions (esp. Herodotus) and to draw connections with contemporary discussions of exile and mobility. Anacharsis's inclusion among the Seven Wise Men enshrines a certain ambivalence into that canon, mirroring tensions in Imperial Greek literature between the centripetal pull of the past and a centrifugal urge toward innovation.

Ian Macgregor Morris (Salzburg) - *The Outsider Within*

Anacharsis represents the archetypical foreigner, the wise stranger, the critical mirror of the "other"; and also a comparative model, on both a personal and socio-political level. "Foreignness" is not only a political or cultural state of being: it can be moral, ethical, the mark of an outsider. In this talk I will outline some general observations on the figure of Anacharsis ancient and modern, before considering his relevance in the early modern period.

The idea of an "outsider within", negotiating social convention and morality in pursuit of self fulfilment, underlay the notion of libertinism in eighteenth-century literary culture; but it overlapped with idea of the wise outsider, epitomised by Shaftesbury's "Ethiopian", whose gaze reveals the ridiculous. These tropes coalesced among the 'travellers to antique lands': From the archaeological adventurers of the Dilettanti, to Mary Shelley's Anglo-Italians, these were figures who chose to be foreign - performing a libertine, transgressive cosmopolitanism - daring their own compatriots to condemn them. The echo of Anacharsis, as traveller, philosopher and satirist, can be found throughout this tradition.

Victoria MacVicar (Kew House School/UCL) - *Philosophers on Tour. Cosmopolitanism and Legacy in Barthelemy's Voyages de Jeune Anacharsis*

Peter Langford (Edge Hill) - *Revolution within the Revolution: The Cosmopolitical Project of Anacharsis Cloots*

The adoption, by Jean-Baptiste du Val-de-Grâce, baron de Cloots (1755-1794), of the proper name, 'Anacharsis', represents both a transformation in the interpretation of the figure of Ancient Anarchasis and in the social and political identity of Cloots within the French

Revolution. The proper name, Anacharsis, functions as a revolutionary name whose adoption is the symbolic expression of Clot's rejection of an aristocratic title and position as the precondition for the revolutionary role of *porte-parole* and capacity to become the 'orator of the human race'. The personal transformation of Clot is accompanied by a further, equally important conferral, by the Legislative Assembly, in 1792, of French citizenship, entailing a degree of recognition analogous to the only other four individuals – Schiller, Klopstock, Paine and Priestly – upon whom French citizenship was also conferred. The position of Anacharsis, as Anacharsis Cloots, is thus the tracing of a difference *within* the French Revolution rather than, as the Ancient Anacharsis, between cultures (Greek and Sythian).

The internal difference becomes that of the relationship between the universality and particularity of the French Revolution in which Cloots seeks – the revolution within the revolution – to emphasize the primacy of its universality. The universality is that of freedom, and the Clootsian position is also the inflection of the original, ancient opposition between nature (barbarian) and culture (civilization), which are now understood in relation to the freedom of the French Revolution. Thus, nature and culture are situated within a political history of the universality of freedom in which nature has become lack of freedom whose constraints are themselves political – tyranny – and culture the experience of the freedom of the French Revolution arising from its constitution.

The development of the distinctive Clootsian position is then traced through Cloots's *Discours prononcé à la barre de l'Assemblée nationale* 1790, *La République Universelle ou Adress aux Tyrannicides* 1792 and *Les Bases Constitutionnelles de la République du Genre Humain* 1793. These texts involve the elaboration of a cosmopolitics which, in its insistent universality, extends the freedom of the French Revolution beyond its territorial confines, and, in turn, transforms the understanding of national belonging and nationhood.

Erica J. Mannucci (Milano Bicocca) - *Anacharsis in the French Revolution: a case-study on Sylvain Maréchal*

Some examples of Anacharsis references in the French revolutionary period are obvious: the success of abbé Barthélemy's erudite novel on the travels of "Anacharsis the younger" in Greece in Aristotle's times; the famous German-born member of the French Convention Jean-Baptiste Cloots shedding his excessively Christian name and choosing Anacharsis instead, exercising a right to adopt a name of choice which came to be recognized by law.

In Sylvain Maréchal, the choice of ancient references was not a simple reflection of the political culture of his times, but an essential and idiosyncratic aspect of his intellectual and political radicalism. Poet and journalist, member of Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals in 1796, but also a well-read librarian, he authored both scholarly works, like the French edition of the *Antiquités d'Herculanum*, and political materials, like the *Almanach des républicains* (1793), where the 6th of March was dedicated to the memory of Anacharsis, seen as a martyr of egalitarianism. Another reference was in the first volume of his *Voyages de Pythagore* (1799), where he gave his version of the "Banquet des Sept Sages", including Anacharsis among them. If Greek authors were already not unanimous in their representations of the legendary travelling Scythian sage, it is illuminating to explore how ancient representations could be "remixed" in that modern revolutionary context to express a political vision. As the way of life Anacharsis represents seems to be the main point for Maréchal, it may prove useful to broaden the perspective to include the way Maréchal used the image of the Scythians or of their modern descendants, peoples on which a new mythology had been developing in the 18th century.

Aurelio Principato (Roma Tre) - *Anacharsis in Chateaubriand's Essai sur les révolutions* (1797)

All that Chateaubriand knew about the legendary Scythian comes from the *Histoire ancienne* (1730-1738) by Charles Rollin, re-edited several times in the Eighteenth-century. The writer tapped into this popularizing work in order to strike up his ambitious first book, the *Essai sur les révolutions*, published in 1797 in London. At that time Chateaubriand was exiled in England as a consequence of his enrolment in the army of exiles fighting against the French Revolution. In this situation, the story of a Scythian being contaminated by contact with the civilized world found fertile ground in the writer's hostility towards the influence attributed to the *philosophes* in generating the revolutionary disaster. Chateaubriand's project of comparing the revolutions of every time with the French Revolution fatally got bogged down in Greek history, for which he widely exploited the *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis* by the abbé Barthélemy (1788) as well. The Barthélemy's fiction was a fashionable but learned reading of his time, which met the taste of a public eager to be initiated to classical antiquity in the age of prospering Neoclassicism. Barthélemy imagined a 4th century b.C. descendant of the Sage, travelling around Greece, meeting the most important men of that time and being informed about every aspect concerning Greek antiquity. But Chateaubriand doesn't seem to be interested by the character of this Anacharsis. What he cares for is to obtain enough documentation and to find a series of examples of individual cases supporting his argument.

Alexei Zadorozhny (Liverpool) - *The Russian Anacharsis: Nikolai Karamzin*

The legend of Anacharsis had a special resonance for the educated Russian public in the late 18th and early 19th century – the period when the Russian Empire has consolidated its control over the territory of ancient Scythia and, what is more, when the impact of westernised education upon the Russian elite was subject to intense reflection; the parallels drawn by the leading Western intellectuals between Anacharsis and major figures of Russian history (e.g. by Voltaire in his *Histoire de l'empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand*, 1759) fuelled the interest in Anacharsis. Abbe Barthélemy's novel was widely read in French, and two-volume Russian translation was published in 1803/1805. The most sustained attempt at a dialogue (or, better, trialogue) with Anacharsis and Barthélemy is found in *Letters of a Russian Traveller* by Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1826). Karamzin provides enthusiastic reportage of his meeting with Barthélemy in Paris in 1790, explicitly calling himself “a young Scythian” while identifying Barthélemy with Plato. Anacharsis is thus a programmatic and multi-layered intertext in Karamzin's *Letters*, which are essays about his journey through the German states, Switzerland, France and England. Karamzin's book (first serialized in 1791-92 in a literary magazine, first complete edition 1801) contains a great deal of ruminations on the European cultures and societies from the double perspective of outsider-insider who claims competent awareness of the classical legacy as well of the current cultural trends, but is also trying to define the parameters of Russian authenticity. (It is worth noting that Karamzin eventually became the most influential Russian prosaist of the period, as well as the author of celebrated if unfinished multi-volume *History of the Russian State*.)