

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

### Poetry, Philosophy, and Mathematics: Performance, Text, and External Representations in Ancient Greek Cultural Practices

The once controversial thesis of Eric Havelock that early Greek philosophy emerges out of, and in opposition to, the tradition of oral poetic performance as *paideia* is now widely accepted (although Havelock may not be mentioned as often as he deserves to be in discussions of the relations between these two cultural practices.) His insistence that the external representations of thought made possible by Greek alphabetic writing were crucial to the development of philosophy is also not acknowledged as often as it should be. This may be due to the policing of current disciplinary boundaries; the neglect, especially among philosophers, of the historical, cultural, and material contexts in which philosophy emerges; and/or the tendency among scholars who focus on texts to ignore the extent to which their existence and transmission depend on material culture. Philosophers who are not entirely persuaded that the study of ancient Greek philosophical texts should include study of the historical and cultural contexts, including material culture, in which they are produced, may be prompted to reconsider the role that external representations and diagrams play in the development of philosophy. The work of David Kirsh (and other cognitive scientists and philosophers of mind) demonstrates quite clearly the relations between cognitive achievements and external representations of thought.

The relations between Ancient Greek philosophy and mathematics have long been the subject of scholarly attention, of course. That Greek mathematics, like Greek philosophy, emerged in the shadow of the public performance of cultural practices has not received much if any recognition until very recently, and the same could be said of the extent to which advances in both cultural practices were made possible by techniques of material culture, including diagrams and texts. The interdisciplinary conference, *Poetry, Philosophy, and Mathematics: Performance, Text, and External Representations in Ancient Greek Cultural Practices*, aims to increase recognition of the extent to which Ancient Greek philosophy and Ancient Greek mathematics as cultural practices, emerged from the traditional Greek practice of poetic performance, on the one hand, and advances in external representations of thought, such as those permitted by literacy and diagramming on the other. The plenary speaker will be Reviel Netz who holds the Suppes Professorship in Greek Mathematics and Astronomy and is Professor of Classics at Stanford University. Prof. Netz is the author of *The Shaping of Deduction in Greek Mathematics: A Study in Cognitive History* (Cambridge, 2003); *The Transformation of Early Mediterranean Mathematics: From Problems to Equations* (Cambridge 2007); and *Ludic Proof: Greek Mathematics and the Alexandrian Aesthetic* (Cambridge, 2009). He is also the author of the translation and commentary of a three volume study: *The Works of Archimedes*; volume one of which, *The Two Books on Sphere and Cylinder: Translation and Commentary*, appeared in 2004 (Cambridge) and volume two of which, *On Spirals: Translation and Commentary*, appeared in 2017 (Cambridge). With William Noel, Nigel Wilson, and Natalie Tchernetska, he is the editor of *The Archimedes Palimpsest*, vols 1 and 2 (Cambridge, 2011). Prof. Netz is also the author of *Barbed Wire: An Ecology of Modernity* (Wesleyan, 2004), and co-author with Maya Arad, of *Stress Positions: Essays on Israeli Literature Between Sound and History* (Ahuzat Bayit, 2008). He is also a published poet in Hebrew.

The conference will take place March 6-7 at the USF Tampa Campus. This conference is sponsored by the *Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies* at the University of South Florida, its Department of Philosophy, and the *American Foundation for Greek Language and Culture*. Those who would like a paper considered for presentation should send an abstract of approximately 250 words to [jwaugh@usf.edu](mailto:jwaugh@usf.edu) or [eturner1@usf.edu](mailto:eturner1@usf.edu) by December 20. Notification regarding acceptance of proposed papers will be made by January 10<sup>th</sup>.