

Call for Papers for AIA Colloquium on Archaeomusicology:
Musical and Choral Performance Spaces in the Ancient World

120TH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
AND THE SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL STUDIES
San Diego, California, January 3-6, 2019

Sponsored by the AIA Archaeomusicology Interest Group

Organizers: Angela Bellia and Daniele Malfitana
(National Research Council - Institute for Archaeological and Monumental Heritage)

Visual and archaeological evidence, as well as literary and epigraphic written sources, inform us that musical and choral performances were an important part of many cults and rituals performed in spaces and architectural buildings of the ancient world. However, it is difficult to understand through archaeological record whether if specific spaces were meant for the performance of music and dance, but also whether a particular architectural feature might have facilitated musical and dancing performances. Music and dance were not confined to dedicated musical settings and dance floors in purpose-built spaces in the forecourts of the sanctuaries; they were performed along processional streets and around altars and cult statues, as well as on monumental steps and dining rooms in a sacred context.

For this reason, we can look at sanctuaries and their immediate surroundings, and make the assumption that any open-air areas that are relatively level and free of obstacles may have functioned as musical settings and dance floors in a religious context. Some questions that papers for this colloquium could address are: do cult spaces and buildings give us information concerning the organisation of musical and dance performances in sacred contexts? Could processional routes and rituals associated with individual buildings point to anything about musical and choral performances? How can the depictions of musical and dance performances in sculpture, painted pottery, and terracotta figurines enrich our understanding of ritual dances and sonic dimensions in a sacred space? Could architectural structures have captured sounds and rhythms in an open air, offering enhanced acoustics as well as improved views of dance movements? How can the buildings that framed the space enrich our knowledge of different kinds of musical and choral performances in antiquity? Could musical and choral performances in a sacred space enhance the active participation of worshippers' implied singing, hearing, and viewing? Could musical and choral performances in sacred spaces be considered as an essential component in strengthening cultural and social identity?

These topics will be addressed through contributions by scholars working in various fields: archaeology, history of religion, archaeomusicology, archaeoacoustics, classics, anthropology, and art history.

To be considered for the colloquium, please send a 200-300 word abstract to Angela Bellia (ang.bellia@gmail.com) and Daniele Malfitana (daniele.malfitana@cnr.it) by Thursday 22 March. If you have questions about whether an idea would fit with the theme, please feel free to contact them. In accordance with AIA regulations, all abstracts for papers will be read anonymously by two referees.