Ancient Theatre and Performance Culture
around the Black Sea

This is the first study of ancient theatre and performance around the coasts of the Black Sea. It brings together key specialists on the region with well-established international scholars of theatre and the Black Sea, from a wide range of disciplines, especially archaeology, drama and history. In that way the wealth of material found around these great coasts is brought together with the best methodology in all fields of study. This landmark book broadens the whole concept and range of theatre outside Athens. It shows ways in which the colonial world of the Black Sea may be compared importantly with southern Italy and Sicily in terms of theatre and performance. At the same time, it shows too how the Black Sea world itself can be understood better through a focus on the development of theatre and performance there, both among Greeks and among their local neighbours.

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Frontispiece  Attic bell-krater fragment from Olbia, 430–420 BC, Kiev: courtesy of the Institute of Archaeology, NASU
Ancient Theatre and Performance Culture around the Black Sea

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Notes on Contributors

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DAVID BRAUND is Emeritus Professor of Black Sea and Mediterranean History at the University of Exeter. He has written extensively on the Black Sea and other themes in antiquity. His monographs include *Georgia in Antiquity* (Clarendon, 1994) and, most recently, *Greek Religion and Cults in the Black Sea Region* (Cambridge, 2018). In 2000 he was made Honorary Member of the Russian Classical Association, and in 2010 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Batumi (Georgia) for his work on ancient Georgia and the Black Sea region.

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**Edith Hall**, after holding tenured positions at the Universities of Reading, Oxford, and at Royal Holloway, University of London, was appointed Professor in the Department of Classics and Centre for Hellenic Studies at King’s College London in 2012. She also co-founded and remains Consultant Director of the Archive of Performances of Greek & Roman Drama at Oxford. Her monographs include *Inventing the Barbarian* (Clarendon, 1989), *Greek Tragedy: Suffering under the Sun* (Oxford, 2010) and *Introducing the Ancient Greeks* (Norton, 2014). She was awarded a Goodwin Prize by the American Classical Society in 2014 for her book *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris* (Oxford), the Erasmus Prize of the European Academy in 2015 for her contribution to international research and an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Athens in 2017. Her most recent book is *Aristotle’s Way: How Ancient Wisdom Can Change Your Life* (Bodley Head, 2018).

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Manana Odisheli is an independent scholar from Georgia, living in Oxford. She was a senior researcher at the Centre for Archaeological Studies in Tbilisi before moving to England in 2000. She has taught at Tbilisi State University, and was Visiting Professor at the Universities of Oxford, Colorado and Catania. She participated in the Austrian excavations at Ephesus, and the Oxford-Batumi Pichvnari project. She has written articles on classical and late antique Georgian art: e.g. ‘Ancient
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JEFFREY RUSTEN has taught at Cornell since 1988, in the Classics Department, of which he has twice been Chair, as well as the Director of Graduate Studies in the graduate programme in theatre. He received his PhD from Harvard, taught there and at the University of Cologne in Germany, as well as at the University of Pennsylvania, and Washington University in St Louis. He also spent a year as Whitehead Visiting Professor at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. His teaching, research and translations focus on the literature of ancient Athens. His research specialities are Thucydides, Athenian comedy (in particular the fragments of comic authors other than Aristophanes), and tragedy and the Athenian tragic theatre. Among his books are translations of Theophrastus’ *Characters* and Philostratus’ *Heroicus* (Loeb Classical Library, 2014), commentaries on Thucydides Book II (Cambridge, 1989), on Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* (Bryn Mawr, 1990) and *The Birth of Comedy*, translations of the most important fragments of two centuries of ancient Greek comedy (Johns Hopkins Press, 2011). He also edited studies of Thucydides by the renowned scholars Mabel Lang (*Narrative and Discourse in Thucydides*, Michigan, 2010) and Jacqueline de Romilly (*The Mind of Thucydides*, with Elizabeth and Hunter Rawlings, Cornell, 2012).

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OLIVER TAPLIN is Professor Emeritus of Classics at Oxford University. His books range from The Stagecraft of Aeschylus (Clarendon, 1977) to Pots and Plays (Getty, 2007). The leading recurrent theme of his work has been the reception of poetry and drama through performance and material culture, in both ancient and modern times. Throughout his career he has tried to keep one foot outside the academy, especially in broadcasting and theatre, both within and beyond the UK. In recent years he has composed verse translations of the anthology Swallow Song, directed for performance by Lydia Konioroudou (2004, 2006), Euripides’ Medea (Chicago, 2013), Sophocles’ Oedipus the King, and other tragedies (Oxford, 2016), and Aeschylus’ Oresteia (Norton 2018).

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STEPHANIE WEST is an Emeritus Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford. She was elected Fellow of the British Academy in 1990 and is a Foreign Member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. She has published The Ptolemaic Papyri of Homer (Springer, 1967), a commentary on Odyssey Books 1–4 (1981, 1988) and articles on a wide range of Greek authors, particularly Herodotus and Lycophron. She is currently working on a commentary on Herodotus Book 4.

ROSIE WYLES has been Lecturer in Classical History and Literature at the University of Kent since 2014. She previously held teaching posts at
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Preface

The idea for this book was born in Crimea in the late summer of 2011, on a memorable whistle-stop reconnaissance trip there, funded in part by the generosity of the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust. I had invited David Braund, as an expert on the antiquities of the Black Sea, to accompany me, the poet Tony Harrison, Tony’s partner Sian Thomas and daughter Jane Harrison (also an archaeologist), on visits to the archaeological sites at Tauric Chersonesus (in the outskirts of Sevastopol) and Nymphaeum near Kerch. Tony was then Leverhulme Artist in Residence at Royal Holloway University of London, where I was at that time employed, and he was writing a new play based on Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Tauris* but set at Sevastopol during the Crimean War. His plan was to stage it in the ancient theatre which stands, restored, in Chersonesus itself.

Sadly, this exciting site-specific project was never realised. It became impossible because of events in the peninsula soon afterwards. In the end, the play premiered on BBC Radio 3 on Sunday 23 April 2017, directed by Emma Harding, with Blake Ritson as the Lieutenant and John Dougall as the Sergeant.¹ But another by-product of the Crimean adventure was this: I became inspired by the rich displays of theatre-related artefacts in the museums of Tauric Chersonesus, Theodosia and Kerch, and soon persuaded David of the clear imperative to do a book together about ancient theatre in the communities of the Black Sea, across the whole region. We needed a third editor who had specialised in the impact of Greek theatre beyond Athens and after the fifth century BC, especially in the visual arts and fragmentary plays, and were delighted when Dr Rosie Wyles, then a colleague of mine at King’s College London, agreed to join us.

The book itself began life at a conference with the same title which Rosie and I convened at KCL on July 4–5 2014 in association with the Archive of Performances of Greek & Roman Drama at Oxford University, led by Professor Fiona Macintosh, which I co-founded in 1996 with Oliver Taplin.

¹ See further, Hall (2018).
and of which I remain Consultant Director: Rosie’s doctoral thesis was also funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Institute grant attached to the Archive’s project on performances in antiquity after the fifth century BC. But the conference also marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Centre for Hellenic Studies at King’s College London, which was generous in its financial support of the conference, as were the Classical Association and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies. Despite difficulties securing visas in time, we were able to welcome our distinguished speakers from Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria as well as the USA and the UK. Most of the chapters in this volume have developed out of papers presented there; some were commissioned afterwards (those by Dana, Bakola and Muratov and the chapter discussing very recent finds from the Taman peninsula on which David collaborated with Vladimir Bochkovoy, Roman Mimokhod and Nikolay Sudarev. We owe a special debt of gratitude to them).

The conference included other fascinating papers which have informed our thinking, one by Olga Sokolova on the stone theatre under careful excavation at Nymphaeum, and two on the twentieth-century reception of Iphigenia in Tauris by Justine McConnell and Laura Monros; a fourth featured Polish theatre director Wlodzimierz Staniewski discussing his production Ifigenia w Taurydzie; we were treated to the British premiere of the play. Yana Sistovari directed dancer Ash Mukherjee in a dazzling intercultural performance inspired by Euripides’ Medea.

Both the conference and the book have been designedly interdisciplinary as well as international in spirit and substance. This volume contains multifarious approaches and arises from a range of different intellectual traditions, most obviously because it embraces both archaeology and literary studies within its expansive take on theatre and performance across the whole Black Sea region. The result is a coherent study, in our view much more than the sum of its parts. However, the other two editors and I have not sought to impose any particular view or agenda, so that readers should not assume that all those involved would accept all that is said here, even if it is probably the case that for the most part they would.

Many other individuals have helped in the slow gestation of this project. We were originally inspired by the work on theatre in southern Italy by the late Kate Bosher, with whom I had collaborated closely, and her untimely death in 2013 left a vast hole in many of our lives as well as in our line-up of speakers. Meanwhile, the generosity of Professor Valentina Krapivina (also prematurely deceased) and her team in Kiev deserves special mention, not least because much of the impetus for this book came from the Olbia fragment which she made available to us (cover illustration).
Laura Douglas of the Arts and Humanities Research Institute at KCL organised the conference perfectly. Becky Brewis drew two of the illustrations in Chapter 13. Others too have offered sustained support of other kinds, including Georgia Bennett. Rosie is grateful to her colleagues at Kent, especially Anne Alwis, and to her husband Perry Holmes, above all, for all kinds of assistance. I would personally like to thank my husband and the father of my children, Richard Poynder, for his infallible humour and encouragement.

Finally, the conference featured a memorable reading in King’s College chapel by Tony Harrison, whose Iphigenia project brought David and me together intellectually. The programme included a poem he had composed after the Crimean adventure. ‘Black Sea Aphrodite’ was first published in the London Review of Books 35.22 on 21 November 2013. It starts from the ‘Aphrodite mosaic’ made of quite large, coarse pebbles which we saw being reassembled in the museum of Tauric Chersonesus:

Chersonesos, Crimea. Archaeologists reassemble miscellaneous pebbles to restore Aphrodite found on the Black Sea the year of my birth, 1937, by Kiev’s Prof. Belov.²

It is entirely appropriate that a project researching ancient cultural life in the Black Sea region should have produced such exquisite original poetry as well as a scholarly book.

² See further Hall (2018) 132–5 and the illustrations there.
Abbreviations

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<td>Dubois, L. (1996) Inscriptions grecques dialectales d’Olbia du Pont, Geneva</td>
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<td>Kaibel, EG</td>
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