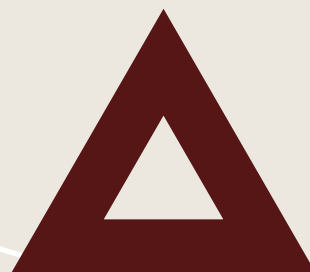


22–23 October 2026

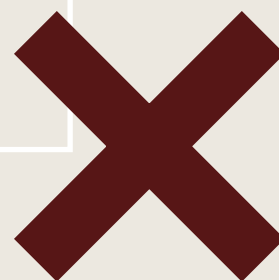
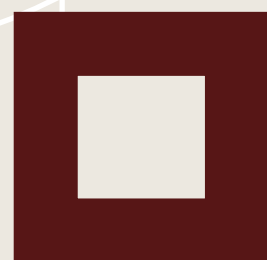
at The Finnish Institute at Athens

Zitrou 16, Athens



'So(cially) Ancient!

Representing Ancient and
Early Medieval Social, Ethnic
and Religious Realities in
Video Games'



SUOMEN ATEENAN-INSTITUUTTI
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ΦΙΛΛΑΝΔΙΚΟ ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ



Finnish
Cultural
Foundation

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Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/EWAtW2GYRHWYPDEEJuMxdw>

PROGRAMME

DAY 1 - Thursday 22 October

9-9:30 Welcome and introduction

9:30-10:30 Keynote 1 - Jane Draycott: 'Everything public that exists about this game is a statement of intent': The challenges of researching historical & archaeological video games'
(Chair: Jasmin Lukkari)

10:30-11 Coffee

11-12:50 Session 1: Religions and mythologies

(Chair: Antti Lampinen)

- **Daniel Hinz** (Cologne): 'Faith as a Resource: Mechanising Religion and the Diachronic Evolution of Cultural Representation in Age of Mythology and its Remake'
- **Juha Isotalo** (Turku): 'Atheist Herodotus? Representation of Greek Religious Reality and Practice in Historical Video Games'
- **Athanasios Votsis & Dina Babuskhina** (Twente): 'Digital Socratism: An existential-semiotic analysis of the Apotheon video game'
- **Charles W. Oughton** (Brigham Young): 'Deus Ludens: The Mechanics of Religion in the Total War Series'

12:50-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16 Session 2: Ancient social conditions

(Chair: Timothy Hart)

- **Alice Rieti** (Trento): 'Playing Sparta: Society and Religion in Assassin's Creed: Odyssey'
- **Niklas Ziegler & Vincent Hupfauer** (Mainz): 'When in Rome, Do as the Romans Did? Anno 117's portrayal of slavery and slavery-related violence'
- **Julie Sawezyn** (Sorbonne): 'The Witch strikes back: feminine power and mythic rewriting in Hades II'

16-16:30 Coffee

16:30-18 Session 3: Ethnic otherness I

(Chair: Antti Lampinen)

- **Anna-Sofia Alitalo** (Oxford): 'Painted Egyptians, Greeks of White Marble: Considering Statues in Assassin's Creed: Origins through the Lens of Chromophobia'
- **Edward Hammond** (Bristol): 'Carthaginian Religion in Total War: ROME II and Old World: A Historical Problem Space Analysis'
- **Maelenn Nivet** (Sorbonne): 'Playable barbarians: ancient stereotypes or modern nationalism?'

20:30 Dinner for the speakers

DAY 2 - Friday 23 October

9:30-10:30 Keynote 2 - Robert Houghton: 'God from the machine: systematising religion in Crusader Kings III'
(Chair: Antti Lampinen)

10:30-11 Coffee

11-12:50 Session 4: Late Antique and Medieval religions

(Chair: Jasmin Lukkari)

- **Karl Dahm** (St Andrews): 'Essentialising Religious Diversity – The Depiction of Late Antique Christianity in the Total War Series'
- **Prolet Decheva** (Mainz): 'Christian relics in video games'
- **Thomas Besson** (Sorbonne): 'A Church in the shadows: from the Dark Ages to the classroom in Assassin's Creed Valhalla'
- **Juan Manuel Rubio Arévalo** (Vienna, ONLINE): 'Assassin's Creed (2007), the Crusades, and the War on Terror. Historical Realism as a Methodological Approach for the Analysis of Historical Video Games'

12:50-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16 Session 5: Ethnic otherness II

(Chair: Juha Isotalo)

- **Timothy C. Hart** (UMass Amherst): 'Build your own 'Decline and Fall': Creative Representations of the Late Antique World within the Crusader Kings III Modding Community'
- **Cédrik Michel** (Reading): 'Video Game Developers and Ethnographers: Imagining the 'Other' in Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice (2017) and Hellblade II: Senua's Saga (2024)'
- **Maxime Kremer** (Sorbonne): 'From Ethnic Categories to Royal Lineages: Modelling Early Medieval Scotland in Historical Strategy Games'

16-16:30 Coffee

16:30-18 Session 6: Representations of the Byzantine Empire

(Chair: Prolet Decheva)

- **Elias Stouraitis** (Thrace): 'Simulating Empire and Faith: Comparative Representations of Western Medieval Europe and Byzantium in Digital Strategy Games'
- **Denis Njari** (Osijek): 'Playing Empire: The Representation of the Eastern Roman Empire in Civilization V'
- **Maria Jokela** (Turku): 'Ἡ φίλη τοῦ Βυζαντίου – Theodora's afterlife in Sid Meier's Civilization V: Gods and Kings'

18-18:30 Concluding conversation