



AIA Colloquium on Archaeomusicology:
Material Evidence of Dance Performances in the Ancient World

123th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
AND THE SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL STUDIES
Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA. January 7-10, 2022

Sponsored by the AIA Archaeomusicology Interest Group

Organizer: Angela Bellia, Institute of Heritage Science, National Research Council of Italy

Although over the last decade various scholarly disciplines have devoted increasing attention to ancient dance, they have done so by focusing on textual sources. However, in reconstructing features of dance performances, the evidence offered by material culture within its archaeological context should play a critical role. Considering dance performances in the ancient world, this panel aims to explore material evidence of dance and highlight the contribution of this evidence to a deeper understanding of the cultural and social meanings and functions of dance and ritualised movements within activities of ritual and everyday life, reconstructing the many different ways and contexts in which they were experienced. Some questions that papers for this colloquium could address are:

- a) Which dancing activities took place in sacred spaces, in private homes and in spaces belonging to public and religious life? Where specifically did ancient peoples experience physical movement events outdoors? Which musical instruments and sound tools accompanied them?
- b) Could performative spaces for dancing be analysed as places where individuals or groups displayed and experienced their collective or personal identities and status?
- c) Could ancient dances and ritualised movements reinforce local individualities? Could physical movements act as a dynamic opportunity for exchange and interaction among different communities?
- d) Could performative spaces enhance our knowledge of the ways dancers interacted with their audiences in those structures? Who were the dance performers at these spaces? Were they professionals?
- e) How did physical movements performed in ancient settings contribute to the complex relationship between buildings, spaces, and social interactions?
- f) Could dancescapes help us to explore how the shapes of spaces and structures interacted with human perception, behaviour, and experience?
- g) Could the characteristics of dancing floors, theatrical structures, and theatres be studied as architectural structures that directed attention to interactions between behaviour and the built environment?

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

Interested scholars should submit for consideration an abstract of approximately 250 words in length by **Thursday April 1st, 2021** to the organizer, Angela Bellia (angbellia@gmail.com). If you have questions about whether an idea would fit with the theme, please feel free to contact Angela. In accordance with AIA regulations, all abstracts for papers will be read anonymously by two referees.