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SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOLOGY  
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## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DODONA: THE ORACULAR LAMELLAE



Oracular lead lamella (AMI 12525). Digital Photograph.

Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina – Photographer: Panagiotis Tsigkoulis © Hellenic Ministry of Culture – Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development

**Under the Aegis of the Ministry of Culture**

**Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina**

**University of Ioannina - Municipality of Dodona**

**October 10-12, 2025**

**October 10, University of Ioannina, “Karolos Papoulias” Conference Center,  
October 11 & 12, Municipality of Dodona, “Prytaneio” Hotel**

## ABSTRACTS

**Alcorac Alonso Déniz**, CNRS / HiSoMa, Lyon

### **Δρυὸς λόγοι: contributions of the Dodona oracular lamellae to the study of the Greek lexicon**

Since the first publications in the late 19th century, the Dodona oracular lamellae have significantly enriched the Greek lexicon. Texts discovered in later excavations continue to reveal new vocabulary. While some terms are previously unattested (διαλυτή, ἐπικράσιον, κτηνίζω, τριθύτας, τύαθος), other words match forms exclusively transmitted by late lexicographers (λάκος, ἐπιστορέω) or correspond, with small differences, to those documented in direct sources (ἐπίπασις, ἐπίπολα). Some confirm proposed etymologies, whereas others introduce new questions (δρίφος, ὀρέγυια). The brevity and lack of broader context often impede precise interpretation of the vocabulary (ἐπαέτιος, ἐπικόριον, σιδάριον). The consultants' specific intents, their hopes, their fears and their circumstances were known only to them and recorded partially or not at all on the lamella. This paper analyses some lexical contributions of the lamellae, focusing on specific features, the interpretive challenges posed by their conciseness, and their role in advancing Greek lexicography



**D. Anagnostopoulos**, University of Ioannina - **Ioanna** - **Vasiliki Patakiouta**, University of Ioannina - **Anastasios Asvestas**, University of Ioannina - **Manolis Georgatis**, University of Ioannina - **Sotirios Danakas**, University of Ioannina, - **Andreas G. Karydas**, Institute of Nuclear and Particle Physics, NCSR "Demokritos" - **Ioulia K. Katsadima**, Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina

### **A Feasibility Study of Non-Invasive Elemental Analysis of the Oracular Lamellae of Dodona Using X-Ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy**

This study presents a feasibility analysis of the elemental composition of the oracular lamellae from Dodona, using both imaging and handheld X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy. Both non-destructive and non-invasive characterization techniques evaluate bulk elemental composition, confirming that lead is the primary material. Imaging XRF produces elemental maps with a spatial resolution of approximately one-tenth of a millimeter, highlighting heterogeneities that reveal material variances, corrosion patterns, insights into the engraving tools, and potential post-depositional alterations. Handheld XRF single-point measurements, which have a spatial resolution of about ten millimeters, allow in-situ detection of elemental traces such as copper, tin, silver, and antimony when conducted under optimized measuring conditions. The analysis of elemental traces aims to explore sources of raw materials and potential links to known ancient mining regions. Integrating macro- and micro-analytical techniques improves our knowledge of the technological and physicochemical characteristics of these unique ritual objects. This understanding could significantly affect their preservation, conservation, and further provenance studies.



Left) Lead tablet from the Sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, in Corinthian script, written boustrophedon (6th century BC). (Archaeological Museum of Ioannina, inv. no. 2941 © Hellenic Ministry of Culture. Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina), Right)

Lead elemental map based on the Pb L $\alpha$  transition.



## **Ilias N. Arnaoutoglou**

Director of research in R.C.H.G.L.-Academy of Athens

### **Dispute resolution and Dodona's oracle**

My presentation will focus on exploring dispute resolution in the surviving texts of Dodona's bronze plates, taking into account both facets of the concept of dispute resolution. The notion has been given a privileged position in research agendas looking into alternatives to state law and procedure. However, it would be a mistake to associate this concept only or solely with informal (or less formal) procedures, such as negotiation, mediation or arbitration. Formal (state) adjudication of disputes is also a major venue for dispute resolution. The questions and answers recorded and survived on the bronze tablets provide some interesting insights into the relation of formal vs. informal ways of resolving disagreements, such as the high number of references to formal procedures, the insecurity it generated, in a society at the edges of the Greek-speaking world.



**Anton Bierl**, University of Basel

### **The Oracle of Dodona about Tragic Wanderings:**

#### **Io, Iole, and Transgressive Males in the Disease of Love**

In this paper I want to discuss how tragedy deals with the famous oracle at Dodona in comparison to everyday and epigraphic evidence of the oracle. I will look at two cases in particular: First, the case of Io in ps.-Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*; her father sends messengers to Dodona to save his daughter from a mental disorder, paradoxically seeking help from Zeus who causes the illness and thus sends her on her horrific wandering through the fringes of the universe. My second case study is about Heracles' distraught wife Deianeira in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. Here, the oracle plays a pivotal in predicting the imminent death of her absent husband and in triggering the catastrophe. Strangely enough, Heracles himself once consulted the oracle about the end of his labors. After their completion, Heracles and others associated his last labor with his mad and violent military expedition to Oichalia to obtain the young girl Iole with whom he had madly fallen in love. As a matter of fact, Heracles had written down the oral utterance on a wooden tablet that he left in the household so that Deianeira would know of the impending deadline that would cause her own crisis. Typically for tragedy, the oracle of Zeus at Dodona does not grant relief from crises and mental disorder, but rather instigates them so that they lead to total destruction. In a vicious logic of archaic prophecy, foreknowledge, transmission, and media transfer at Dodona, the mad *eros* by male transgressors circulates back to their female victims so that the entire society is infected by the *nosos*.



**Carlos Candel Lozano**, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain

### **Some issues in the relationships between dialect and alphabet in the Dodona lamellae**

The Dodona corpus of oracular lamellae presents a remarkable variety of alphabets and letterforms. However, unlike the study of the dialects attested in these lamellae, a comprehensive and systematic analysis of these alphabets remains a desideratum. With few exceptions—such as individual remarks on particular inscriptions made by the editors and a limited number of studies focusing on specific issues (e.g., Johnston 2021<sup>1</sup>)—alphabetic variation has received little attention. Moreover, while the alphabet is often used as a tool for chronological classification, it is rarely considered in discussions of dialectal differentiation.

Within the framework of my ongoing doctoral dissertation on the dialectal varieties of the Dodona lead tablets, this paper aims to explore the relationship between alphabets and dialects in cases where the former may assist in determining the latter. To this end, the study draws on data from the alphabets and letterforms of specific inscriptions, with particular attention to their dialectal features. When possible, it also incorporates observations made through autopsies of the tablets conducted at the Archaeological Museum of Ioannina.



**Jan-Mathieu Carbon**, Queen's University, Canada

### **Laying on Hands: Dodona's Evidence for a Common Practice of Healing**

A few of the tablets from the oracle at Dodona (DVC 2549A and 3174A) have been interpreted as referring to a female healer called Paiania/Paionia, who notably seems to have practiced healing through her hands (see also Chaniotis 2017, 53-54). Since the tablets do not appear to be exactly contemporaneous, one possibility would be to interpret the name Paiania/Paionia as a generic one for a "healer". Yet there is another option. In this paper, I argue that an alternative way of understanding these tablets is as references to "healing hands", treating *παίωνιος* and a \**παϊάνιος* (already attested for proper nouns) as adjectives. The formulation "healing hands" is found in many literary sources (Aisch. *Suppl.* 1066; Soph. *Philoct.* 1345; Ar. *Acharn.* 1223; *Anth. Gr.* 14.55). Though poetic, these sources attest to a common belief about cures involving a standard mechanism for physical therapy. These two important texts, together with a few others (DVC 1426A and 3622B, and perhaps 2861B), thus provide us with key pieces of evidence for an apparently widely spread healing practice in antiquity: laying hands on a physical wound or tumour in order to heal it (cf. Kosak 1999; Chaniotis 2017; Skalisti 2021). Using comparative evidence, this paper will sketch the background, the forms of application, and the development of therapeutic touch in the Eastern Mediterranean.



**Angelos Chaniotis**, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

### **The Oracle of Dodona: a refuge for human anxieties**

The anxieties and feelings of the common people of antiquity are expressed in various epigraphic sources, such as epitaphs, dedications, confession inscriptions, graffiti, and curse tablets. One of the best relevant sources is the ensemble of oracular inquiries from Dodona. Their value consists in their large number, the origin from one single sanctuary, the diversity of the questions, and the presence of aspects of orality. Should I get another wife? Who stole my money? Why is my family affected by a disease? Should I change my occupation? Brief and direct, questions such as these not only reveal the emotional state of the worshippers (fear, anger, desire, affection etc.) but they only also contribute to our understanding of emotional display and the use of emotional language.



**Vassiliki Chanteli**, University of Ioannina

### **The Public Inquiry of the Chaonians at the Oracle of Dodona The Oracular Tablet as a Unique Testimony and Invaluable Historical Source**

The importance of the oracle of Dodona for the public affairs of the ancient Greeks is well known from the ancient sources and unquestionable. However, the oracular tablets discovered in the Epirote sanctuary

constitute the most direct and also eloquent remains of antiquity, bringing to light the genuine oracular inquiries of the time and revealing, without any mediation or alteration, the true character, processes and dimensions of the multifaceted phenomenon of public consultation. Their greatest contribution lies in the recovery of reliable and therefore invaluable information even about the smallest and most obscure communities, which certainly escape the attention of the ancient authors and any concern for their preservation. Through the presentation of a single tablet, the oracular inscription of the *polis of the Chaonians*, one of the most important *ethne* of Epirus, concerning the reconstruction of a temple, the various functions of an ancient oracle and the multiple aspects of a public consultation are highlighted. The context and exact meaning of this question are highly controversial, but its discovery uniquely enriches and broadens the historical field of research on ancient Epirus and contributes greatly to a deeper and more complex knowledge and understanding of all the structures, religious, political, economic, etc., that pervaded the ancient Greek world.



**Diego Chapinal-Heras**, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

**Family issues in Dodona: Maternity and paternity  
from the epigraphic evidence from the Epirote sanctuary**

This study aims to focus on the testimonies of consultations with the Oracle of Dodona related to maternity or paternity, either with a single counsellor or with a couple. Particular attention will be paid to the female sphere, with situations of vulnerability and maternity, such as the search for a mate, the birth of children, the gain or loss of wealth, curses and the liberation of slaves. The analysis continues with an attempt to obtain information about paternity, i.e. the role of the father in a family context. A series of oracular questions are examined and their information allows us to deepen our knowledge of women in Greek society, especially in the region of Epirus, as well as various aspects related to parenthood that we can obtain from oracular activity.



**Karolina Frank**, University of Warsaw

**Modes of communication: Supplicants, oracle, gods**

The oracular tablets from Dodona, inscribed with the enquiries of those who sought guidance at the Epirote sanctuary, formed an integral part of the intricate communicative framework that connected supplicants, the oracle, and its patron deities. This paper examines the dynamics and mechanics of this interaction, with a particular focus on the structure and phrasing of oracular enquiries. It explores the relationship between the formulation of a question and both the subject of consultation and the identity of the petitioner, arguing that certain social groups, when asking about specific matters, exhibited distinct linguistic preferences. Where possible, the study will also consider whether the supplicant may have personally inscribed their question. Finally, the paper analyzes the various rhetorical strategies employed in addressing the gods of Dodona, shedding light on how the oracle was engaged to optimise communication with the divine.



**Ariadni Gartziou-Tatti**, University of Ioannina

### **Bloodless Sacrifice and offerings at Dodona**

The surviving oracular tablets from Dodona have unveiled previously unknown aspects of the oracular procedure and the religious practices observed at the sanctuary throughout its centuries-long history. This study aims to examine the most significant archaeological, inscriptional, and literary evidence that sheds light on information regarding bloodless sacrifices and offerings at the Dodona sanctuary. Our investigation is structured into three key categories. The first focuses on the rules of conduct, including the vocabulary associated with ritual practices, the altars, and specific ritual elements such as vessels, the act of pouring, the officiating personnel, as well as the different types of libations (*choai, spondai*) and the nature of the substances used—water, milk, wine, and oil. The second category examines the deities to whom these rites were dedicated, including gods, heroes, and daemons. The third category explores the identity and gender of petitioners, along with the nature of their inquiries, aiming to elucidate the ways in which they attempted to communicate with the divine sphere.



**Stella Georgoudi**, École Pratique des Hautes Études –Unité de recherche AnHIMA, Paris, University of Ioannina

### **Ἰλάσκομαι: some remarks on the verb in Dodona's lamellae**

Starting from a question addressed to the God - dating from the first half of the 5th century BC and inscribed in the Corinthian alphabet - in which Dikaïos asks whether he should appease (or expiate) a hero in order to solve a health problem, to bring about an improvement in his illness (DVC 481: ...ἔ έρόον ἱλαζόμενος [τινα] καὶ άπότροπον ποέσας), I will attempt to examine and comment on the content of selected inscriptions on oracular lamellae where the verb ἱλάσκομαι ("to appease") is attested. My focus will be on presenting and interpreting the reasons why the petitioner resorts to the use of this specific term, invoking the help of gods and heroes (i.e., DVC 359B, 3rd c. BCE, ll. 2-3: ...τί[να θεῶν ἦ] / ἡρώων ἱλασκόμενος ὑγιαίνο[ι---]), as well as the accompanying ritual practices - such as sacrificial offerings to named deities (DVC 2327A, 4th c. BC: [- - -] ωι ἦ τήν Ἰσιν / θύω[ν ἱλάσκωμαι]).



**Moritz Hinsch**, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

### **The Dodona Tablets and the Economy of Ancient Greece**

The Dodona tablets are a unique source for writing the history of the ancient Greek economy. Most of our usual evidence is literary and pertains only to one specific case – classical Athens. The Dodona tablets instead allow us to cast a much wider view. Rather than illuminating the economic activities of the elite stratum of a single city-state, they carry information on the economic activities of hundreds of people of different gender, status, and occupation from all over the Greek world in the period from c. 500 to 167 BCE. This paper explores the potentials and challenges of using the Dodona tablets as a source for economic history through quantitative and qualitative methods. While the tablets reveal a world of remarkable mobility and commercial exchange, they also help us to understand the limits and peculiarities of movement and exchange in the Greek world.





**Maria Intrieri**, Università della Calabria

### **Agriculture and animal husbandry in the oracular tablets**

The aim of the paper is to provide an overview of the tablets containing oracular questions related in various ways to the field of agriculture and livestock farming. Although it is a corpus of texts that are almost always very brief or often fragmented, it still offers interesting elements for analysis. Particular attention will be given to the classification of the enquiries by categories (private or public), types (as is the case with the surprisingly recurring question "Should I farm?"), and specific themes. Finally, a detailed analysis will also be dedicated to the origin of the enquirers, both when explicitly indicated, as in some texts (see Lhôte no. 75), and when it can be inferred from the context with a good level of approximation.



**Ioulia K. Katsadima**, Ephorate of the Antiquities of Ioannina

### **Tracing connections between Ambracia and Dodona: insights from the oracular lamellae**

Ambracia (modern Arta) lies on southern Epirus, along the northern shores of the Ambracian Gulf. Founded by the Corinthians in the last quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC Ambracia flourished during the Classical and Hellenistic periods; it was a political hub and a regional trade center, having access to networks that connected Southern Greece with the epirotic mainland, and in particular the sanctuary of Dodona.

This paper provides a brief synthesis of the evidence and principal points of discussion concerning the connections between Ambracia and Dodona, including both archaeological and epigraphic material. The presentation will be focused on analyzing lamellae bearing either the toponym or the polis ethnic, as well as onomastic evidence, dated mostly to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. Lamellae with texts in Corinthian epichoric alphabet are also to be considered.



**Elias Koulakiotis**, University of Ioannina

### **Tharypas, Thessaly and Dodona: Connecting the dots**

Literary and epigraphical sources may let us reconstruct some aspects of king Tharypas' personal and political life by the end of 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. The paper aims at contextualizing episodes of a real and invented tradition regarding the Molossian king, and offering a framework for historical interpretation of the lamellae *Dakaris-Vokotopoulou-Christidis* (2013), n° 2148A and n° 3368B.



**Elisa Le Bail**, Université Paris, Panthéon-Sorbonne / AnHIMA

### **'Should I date Plato?' The lamellae from Dodona providing insights on relationships between men and women**

The collection of inscriptions on the lamellae from Dodona are now recognized as a precious material to study many aspects of daily life in ancient Greece. Moreover, those inscriptions grant us access to ancient men and women's voices providing new data to scholars interested in women and gender history in Antiquity. Like Plaurata asking Zeus and Diona about the relationship she thought about pursuing with Platon (or Plator) son of Karpos (*DVC* 2609A), some women appear at Dodona to have had some agency when interacting and pursuing relationships with men. Thus, this paper will focus on men and women inquiries and the relationships they entertained or pursued that are noticeable in the lamellae. Through

a gender analysis of the vocabulary used by the inquirers, we will compare men and women's questions and requests to the gods evoking a relationship with a person of the other sex. We will put the emphasis on intimate and marital relationships to try to understand how (potential) partners perceived and interacted with each other and what issues brought them to the oracle. Finally, we will also consider the inquiries made to the gods by partners worrying and acting together for their household.



**Michael Lipka**, University of Patras

### **Dodonaean Oracular Responses and Metre**

This paper examines whether oracular responses from Dodona were delivered in prose, as suggested by the inscriptional evidence, or whether they could also be composed in dactylic hexameters—and if so, under what circumstances and by whom—as often found in literary sources. The question is connected to the production of metrical oracles at Delphi up to the Hellenistic period, where a similar discrepancy between inscriptional and literary evidence can be observed.



**Mario Lombardo**, Università del Salento - Salento University, Lecce, Italy

### **For a better life: mobility and *metabolé* in the Dodona lamellae**

#### **Some case studies**

The paper will focus on the texts of some interrogations in the Dodona lamellae, in which one can discern a significant connection between mobility, in a physical and geographical sense, that is migrating, moving to a new city or region, sometimes overseas and far away, on the one hand, and, on the other, the project of changing not only one's residence but also one's job in the hope of reaching a better life, in terms of higher earnings, but not only. Projects and hopes that induced, and possibly required (among other things?), going to Dodona to ask the god for approval and blessings. Among the case studies that will be briefly addressed and discussed: Lhote 100 (*es Adrian...es Tisates*); 102 (*eis Sikelian*); 103 (*es Syrakousas*); 106 (*eis Messenen*); 114 (*es Krotona*); 133A (*es Sybarin*); Dakaris, Vokotopoulou, Christidis 1363 A (*is Karchedona*); Dakaris, Vokotopoulou, Christidis 228 B; 463A; 2762A; 3030A; 3146A; 3517A (*eis Pharon*).



**Elena Martín González - Stavroula Konstantopoulou** University of Valladolid (Spain)

### **Re-editing the Oracular Tablets from Dodona**

#### **with the Help of Artificial Intelligence**

The oracular inscriptions from the sanctuary of Dodona have been the focus of intense scholarly activity over the past decade, following the landmark 2013 edition. Nevertheless, this unique material continues to raise complex epigraphic and philological questions that invite renewed investigation.

This paper introduces the preliminary outcomes of *Dodona Travels to Ithaca: Artificial Intelligence Applied to the Edition of Greek Inscriptions*, a research project based at the University of Valladolid (Spain) and funded by the European Union (NextGenerationEU). The project explores the integration of artificial intelligence—specifically the deep neural network Ithaca—into the editorial process of Greek inscriptions. Our goal is to produce a “hybrid” critical edition that combines traditional philological expertise with AI-generated restorations, datings, and geographical attributions.

This collaborative approach offers mutual benefits: while AI contributes new perspectives to the editorial process, the complexity of the Dodona corpus presents a rigorous challenge for the model's capabilities.



The paper will reflect on methodological issues and illustrate the potential of this approach through selected examples.



**Julián V. Méndez Dosuna**, Universidad de Salamanca

### **Punctuation marks in the Dodona tablets**

Unlike in syllabic scripts (Linear B, Cypriot syllabic script), continuous writing without separation of words or other linguistic units clearly prevails in alphabetic Greek inscriptions. This notwithstanding, a not negligible number of texts use punctuation marks that play a similar role to that of blank spaces or punctuation marks in present-day standardised texts. In his study of inscriptional punctuation Devine and Stephens established three types of inscriptions in the archaic period based on the linguistic domain targeted: the appositive group (word), the minor phrase, and the major phrase.

The oracular tablets of Dodona are no exception to the general rule. Enquiries with punctuation marks are clearly in the minority. Interestingly, while the texts of an official character inscribed on hard material (stone, metal) were written by «professionals» of script, the enquiries to the oracle of Zeus seem to have been written by private individuals. In my paper I intend to analyse the tablets exhibiting punctuation marks.



**Melina Naka - George Kyrkos**, Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina.

### **Lead: corrosion, conservation, preservation**

#### **A different approach to the oracular lamellae of Dodona**

The lead oracular lamellae of Dodona have been, since May 2023, the second entry of Greece in UNESCO's "Memory of the World" International Register. At the same time, in April 2024, the certification of the Archaeological Museum of Ioannina was approved by the Central Archaeological Council.

The Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina continues its efforts to upgrade and improve the services offered, as well as the conditions of exhibition, storage, conservation, and management of its collections.

This presentation approaches this unique set of artifacts from the perspective of their material composition. It presents the physicochemical properties of lead, its corrosion mechanisms, and methods of conservation and protection.

The preservation status, proposed interventions, and storage methods for the lead oracle tablets of Ancient Dodona, which are kept in the institution's repositories, are discussed. In addition to protecting the artifacts, the goal of this project is to ensure easy and secure access to the entire collection for an increasing number of researchers.



**Enrique Nieto Izquierdo**, Center for Hellenic Studies (Washington) / AnHIMA, Paris

### **Zeus, Dione and the Others**

#### **On the *synnaoi* gods of the oracular shrine of Dodona**

This paper investigates the concept of *synnaoi* gods—divinities coexisting in a sanctuary with a primary deity—centering on the oracular shrine of Dodona, where Zeus and Dione hold prominence while other *synnaoi* gods are explicitly mentioned in the sources. It examines the typology and roles of associated deities (e.g., Themis, Hestia, Tyche, Apollo), comparing them to patterns in sanctuaries like Epidauros' Asklepieion or Rhodes' sanctuary of Athena Lindia. Are *synnaoi* gods subordinate, dependent on the tutelary deity, or do they wield independent functions? The study also explores whether these gods

possess oracular agency—e.g., Themis, occasionally eclipsing Dione or addressed alone in queries—and assesses their spatial and cultic importance, such as evidence of dedicated spaces within Zeus *Dodonaios*'s precinct. Last but not least, it explores how *synnaoi* gods differ from other deities also present in the sanctuary, as well as the dynamic interplays of divine roles within Dodona's sacred landscape.



**Varvara N. Papadopoulou**, Emerita Curator of Antiquities - **Eleni D. Vasileiou**, Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina

#### **The lead tablets of Dodona. The route to Unesco**

From the first moment of their discovery, the lead tablets of Dodona attracted the interest of the world scientific community and they became the subject of a large number of articles, books and doctoral theses. The tablets constitute a unique find worldwide. Their importance lies in the information they provide on all aspects of antiquity (society, economy, religion, foreign policy), on linguistics and the reconstruction of the financing process.

In the context of promoting the research and the study of the lead tablets, in September 2016, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina, in collaboration with the Region of Epirus and the Municipalities of Ioannina and Dodona, organized a scientific meeting entitled "Dodona. The omen's questions. New approaches to the lead tablets" at the Acropolis Museum. During the Meeting, the urgent need to inscribe the tablets in the Unesco "Memory of the World" list was emphasized for the first time.

Five years later and in the midst of the pandemic, in November 2021, due to the persistent effort of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina, the Ministry of Culture and Sports submitted a proposal to register the lead tablets of Dodona in the UNESCO program "Memory of the World".

On May 2023, Unesco decided to inscribe the corpus of the lead tablets of Dodona on its Memory of the World register!



**Varvara N. Papadopoulou - Vivi Yiouni - Hypatia Faklari - Christos Kleitsas - Melina Naka - Christos Tsiakoumis**, Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina

#### **Lead Oracular Tablets**

##### **from the Bouleuterion at the Sanctuary of Dodona**

The building of the Bouleuterion at the sanctuary of Dodona (1.250-1.300 sq.m.), which was founded in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, is located to the east of the theater and consists of a large rectangular hall with eight columns and a Doric portico attached to the facade. During the excavations of S. Dakaris at the Bouleuterion (1965, 1967, 1968, 1971-1973), at least 56 lead oracular tablets were found, two of which are exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Ioannina. In this announcement, we will present the distribution of the lead tablets over various parts of the Bouleuterion and their archaeological context, as most of them were deposited before the foundation of this monumental building, where the official delegations of the Epirote Alliance and later of the Epirote League convened.



**J. Pavlopoulos**, Athens University of Economics and Business / Archimedes Athena Research Center, Greece – **P. Filos**, University of Ioannina – **E. Martín González**, University of Valladolid, Spain – **Paraskevi Platanou**, Athens University of Economics and Business / Archimedes Athena Research Center, Greece

#### **A new computational approach to textual restoration in the oracular corpus from Dodona**

Computational approaches to the study of ancient texts have been a reality for a fair number of years now, e.g. restoration of papyrus texts or stylometric analysis of literary texts, which is often accompanied by authorship examination, etc. In the field of epigraphy in particular, the recent launching of the pioneering ITHACA project, despite some undeniable shortcomings, has made an impact and seems promising as regards textual restoration in particular. Nonetheless, the study of the oracular corpus from Dodona presents additional difficulties and requires a tailor-made model of computational analysis. Hence, we are going to propose in this presentation a new computational approach to the textual restoration and chronological attribution of the oracular lamellae from Dodona. Our proposal is based on Machine Learning, notably the application of Natural Language Processing and Handwritten Text Recognition to facsimiles of the Dodona lamellae. The results will be compared with estimates offered by experts (epigraphists, etc.), both in quantitative terms and in the form of case studies, so they can be (re-) assessed accordingly.



**Jessica Piccinini**, Università di Macerata, Italia

### **Royal Consultations at Dodona**

This paper will focus on the role of the Molossian royal family in the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, considering both epigraphic and archaeological evidence. Particular attention is given to the oracular tablets that record consultations made by Molossian rulers and their kin, which shed light on the political, religious, and familial concerns that brought them to seek divine guidance. Alongside the tablets, the paper also considers material dedications attributable to members of the royal household, highlighting their significance. By integrating textual and material evidence, the study underscores Dodona's function not only as a religious centre but also as a stage for the negotiation of royal power and representation in the wider Greek world.



**Eleni Skalisti- George Georgoulas**, Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina

### **Notes on Dodona's oracular tablets**

Towards a new edition of oracular tablets from Dodona we studied also all the published material which is stored in the Museum of Ioannina. After autopsy we confirm the readings in the majority of the texts while some inscriptions can be corrected as there are numerous problematic inquiries. In this paper we will present corrections on the basis of our autopsies to some of the texts and we propose new readings. In some cases also we read parts of other texts or propose new transcriptions.



**K.I. Soueref**, Emeritus Ephor of Antiquities

### **Open questions of the oracular lamellae**

The numerous lead plates from the oracle of Dodona (ca. 6th-3rd century BC), and their more numerous inscriptions constitute, among other things, issues of social history, with references to everyday life, mobility, interpersonal relationships. The anthropological significance of the inscriptions lies in the documentation of individuals, but also groups and supplicants from various origins, mainly of the Greek world, who, through the inscriptions, talked with their gods, by asking questions and indicating answers. But how did the Oracle of Dodona really function?

Various research and methodological issues arise, due to the limited data. Some valid hypotheses have been proposed, while scientific and interdisciplinary studies and approaches are increasing at the Greek

and international level. The fragmentary nature of the majority of the texts, the syntactically diverging formulae and the unequal abilities in writing make them difficult to read and interpret.

The inscriptions on the lamellae arose Dodona to a place of promotion of writing and literacy, where Greek dialects are intersected and tested. Did the oral and written process of conferring the divine power coexist? Was the transfer of the oral word into writing and vice versa affected?

The presence of scribes, to serve the pilgrims or their representatives, who would wish to submit questions, is considered certain, without excluding the possibility that visitors brought with them lamellae already inscribed. Were there occasional scribes of various origins or officials on site? Are there variations in the syntax of the questions and their formal characteristics, but can we also assume interferences in the text by the mediation of the scribes?

This presentation intends to highlight some of the unresolved questions regarding the inscribed lead plates from Dodona, the materiality of which documents timeless human behaviors.