

As the panel suggests, tragedy, or the idea of the tragic, became linked to the articulation of modernity (from) around 1800. Particularly in its German context, that same period is often examined for the new impetus which classical knowledge received from two directions: from philosophy, literature and the arts; and from the establishing of classical philology as a normative institutional practice. However, the newly prominent "modern" discourses on the tragic have been mainly examined in the light of philosophical and artistic thought, with philological historicism and positivism as, at best, its dustier "other". Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) was in many ways the event that deliberately highlighted the gap between radically modern thinking and dull disciplinary myopia, and we as scholars of the idea of tragedy have usually taken him at face value.

What this paper sets out to do is to throw light on the prehistory of that relation between institutional and extra-institutional (para-institutional?) thinking about tragedy. Philology, however substantial the grain of truth in Nietzsche's indictment, configured itself around 1800 as a discipline that was eminently concerned with subjectivity as a modern phenomenon, and it is worth revisiting what the programmatic and encyclopaedic writings on *Altertumswissenschaft* as a practice, such as F.A. Wolf's *Einleitung in die Altertumswissenschaft* (1807), F. Ast's *Grundriss der Philologie* (1808), or A. Boeckh's *Encyclopädie und Methodologie der Philologischen Wissenschaften* (1877) had to say about Greek tragedy as a historical, linguistic and ideal phenomenon. In this phase of institutional consolidation, the vocabulary of freedom, necessity and individuality that is familiar from the discourse of German Idealism, has a noticeable impact on how scholarship establishes its parameters for studying ancient drama.

In other words, in order to approach the question of how tragedy became a parameter of thinking through modernity, it is worth looking at what the scholarly perspective of a still new discipline had to suggest on the matter. What, if any, was the scholarly consensus? How intensely was tragedy a subject of scholarly research? To lay bare some of the network that connects philosophical aesthetics and philology when it comes to gaining knowledge of ancient tragedy, and to ask about the shape of that network, may not only throw the language of modernity into greater relief; it may also help us to unsettle the firm distinction between the scholar and the non-scholar, which was a distinction deliberately cultivated (though not without a nostalgic sense of loss) by classical scholars themselves.