Evaluating the Classical Greek Reception in *Genshin Impact* through the transcultural study lens: A Case Study of Enkanomiya Region

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INTRODUCTION

In current classical game studies, the Graeco-Roman classical culture in digital games has become a significant aspect (Rollinger, 2020). Academic research usually focuses on the usage of classics in games produced and played in North America and Europe (Clare, 2021). For example, Ross Clare (2021) proposed a valid framework for understanding the vibrant mixture of European-themed classical games influenced by modern and ancient historical materials and their receptions, along with surrounding mythology and folklore. Furthermore, Dom Ford (2025) suggested the concept of 'mytholudics' as an analytical structure to understand classical-related games as a type of mythology, along with their surrounding folklore. Recently, the Mythological Game Studies Conference (2025) featured more than thirty papers that explored transcultural narratives, including the Graeco-Roman-inspired game *Hades* (Supergiant Games, 2020) and the tabletop role-playing game *Lex Arcana* (Colovini et al., 1993), set in the background of the Western Roman Empire.

Recently, Graeco-Roman inspirations have become increasingly prominent in East Asian games. A notable example of this is the immensely popular role-playing game *Genshin Impact*, developed by the Chinese studio HoYoVerse in 2020. In the game, the player assumes the role of a traveller looking for their lost sibling. The fantasy world of 'Teyvat', in which the game is set, heavily incorporates Ancient Greek cultural references within its storylines, which are set in the Enkanomiya region, allowing players to engage with on-screen events and explore classical-inspired narratives. The Ancient Greek inspirations within the game have been analysed by Wang's (2024) paper on how *Genshin Impact* retold the folklore of Atlantis through the lens of Japanese mythology in Enkanomiya's storyline, and Thomas's (2025) work on the transcultural combination and Graeco-Roman receptions within *Genshin Impact.* Apart from its classical elements, the game has also been well researched in its portrayal of the 'Chineseness' (Li and Li, 2023), or the emergence of Chinese soft power demonstrated by the delicate multicultural representation within the game (Tang and Li, 2025).

Thus, this article will examine the use of classical Greek elements in *Genshin Impact*'s storytelling, following Rachael Hutchinson's (2019) research framework to analyse the textual and visual representations in the game. Through a dynamic reimagining of Plato's philosophy, the video game created an alternative underground civilisation similar to Atlantis within the Enkanomiya region. This civilisation is depicted with stunning remnants of classical Greek columns, rich narration and dialogues involving Greek mythology and folklore figures (e.g., Helios, Phaethon, Ouroboros), and breathtaking cutscenes showing the beauty of the marvellous palace beneath an abyss. Players could explore the integration of Japanese mythology and Greek folklore in this region, including interactions with the classical Greek figures and performing rituals inspired by Greek and Japanese mythology.

The integration reflects a cultural pattern that moved away from the anachronism and multiculturalism typical of Japanese animation and games, which was influenced by the Japanese role-playing games' multiculturalism traditions, and has heavily received popularity in mainland China since the 1990s (Liao, 2016). The Ancient Greek cultural integration can also be referred to another HoYoVerse game, *Honkai: Star Rail* (2023). Previously, scholars also discussed the multiculturalism traditions in the Japanese game industry. While Iwabuchi (2002) considered Japanese games using the 'cultural odourless' effects to achieve global success, Miyake (2015) argued that the Japanese creative cultural industry was also heavily based on Self-Orientalism and cultural stereotypes, employing parodies to soften strict themes and attract attention in the worldwide entertainment market. In *Genshin Impact*, compared to the previous passive Japanese cultural industry strategy, the depiction of diverse cultures originated from a more proactive multicultural approach nourished by the Chinese government's official cultural policies (Tang and Li, 2025). Overall, this essay aims to contribute to the research on classical reception and the influence of multiculturalism in East Asian games, bridging the current studies of *Genshin Impact* on its Chinese influence with the classical reception studies.

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BIO

Hanjun Shi is a PhD researcher at University of the Arts London, specialising in the historical receptions in digital games, especially in games as *Genshin Impact* and *Pentiment*. Previously, they presented research papers at the 2024 DiGRA conference and the 2025 CEEGS PhD Consortium.

Before pursuing a PhD, they earned a BA and MA in History, with expertise in the history of classical Greece, the medieval Carolingian Empire, and late medieval England. Additionally, Hanjun completed an MA in Games Design at UAL, combining historical knowledge with technical and creative skills to explore how games can engage with culture, history, and identity.

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