

CONFÉRENCE

Cavafy's "Waiting for the Barbarians" in Times of Crisis: The Poem's Afterlives from 1989 to the Present

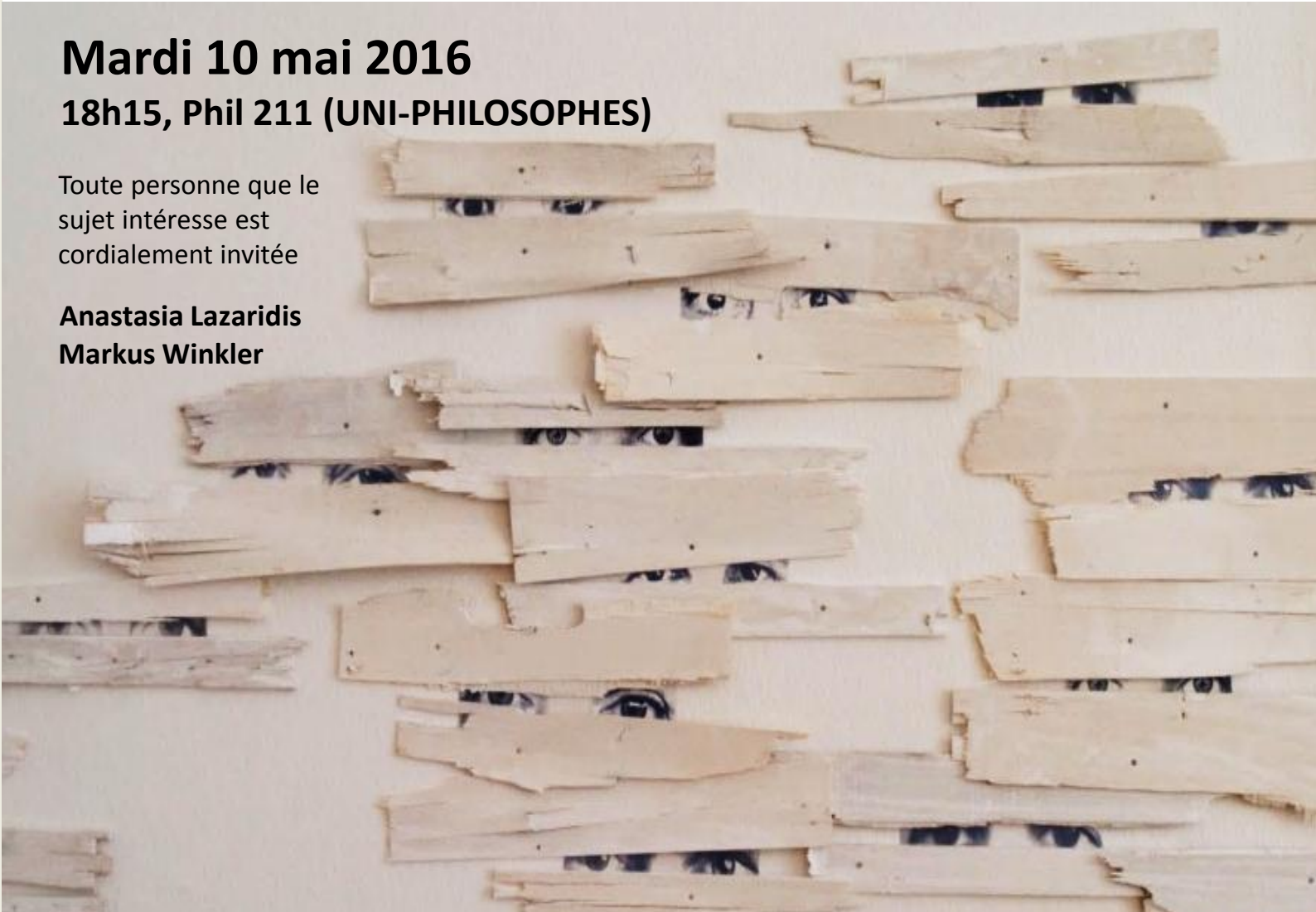
par Prof. Maria Boletsi (Université de Leiden, Pays-Bas)

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18h15, Phil 211 (UNI-PHILOSOPHES)

Toute personne que le sujet intéresse est cordialement invitée

Anastasia Lazaridis
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C.P. Cavafy's poem "Waiting for the Barbarians" (1904) has been adapted and restaged in art, literature, and music from the mid-twentieth century to the present. Since 1989 and especially since the events on September 11, 2001, however, the theme of "waiting for the barbarians" also seems to haunt the Western political and public sphere. This talk will center on the poem's contemporary "afterlives" in Western political and cultural realities. Its recurrent evocation in newspaper articles, the media, and cultural theory, showcases its prominent function in debates about post-Cold War and post-9/11 realities. Cavafy's "barbarians" respond to desires and fears amplified since 1989. They are mobilized in critiques of the American Empire; they call attention to the fear of others or of the unknown after the purported rupture of 9/11 and up to the current refugee crisis. But they also give voice to the desire for overturning saturated systems and forming new narratives and communities, particularly in the context of the (financial) crisis and recent protest movements.

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