

Amphitheatre of the Central Library of Aristotle University

Monday, 18 May 2026, and Tuesday, 19 May 2026

Aspects of Gender from Antiquity to the Era of AI

Satellite workshop of the conference Aristotle Innovation Forum: From Aristotle to AI

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Aspects of Gender from Antiquity to the Era of AI

This workshop explores conceptions, representations, and practices of gender from antiquity to the contemporary era of artificial intelligence. Taking a long historical and theoretical view, the workshop invites participants to reflect on how ancient frameworks of gender have been constructed, transmitted, challenged, and reconfigured across time—and how they continue to inform, explicitly or implicitly, modern philosophical, social, legal, and technological discourses.

By bringing together Classical Philology, Ancient to Modern History, Philosophy, and the Social Sciences (including Anthropology, Psychology, and Constitutional Law), the workshop aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue on gender as a category of analysis, experience, and power. Particular attention will be given to questions of continuity and rupture: what survives from ancient thought, what is transformed, and what is radically new in the age of algorithmic reasoning and AI-mediated social structures.

We welcome papers that engage with gender from antiquity to the present, including—but not limited to—the following themes:

- Gender in ancient literary, philosophical, historical, and legal texts
- Ancient theories of sex, body, and difference
- Gender, normativity, and social order in antiquity
- Reception of ancient gender concepts in later philosophical, political, or legal thought
- Gender, authority, and expertise from classical traditions to modern institutions
- Feminist, queer, or intersectional readings of ancient sources
- Gender in constitutional, psychological, sociological, or anthropological perspectives
- Gender, agency, and representation in digital culture and AI
- Continuities and discontinuities between ancient epistemologies and AI-driven models of the human

The workshop is designed as an intensive, discussion-oriented event and will take place as a satellite session of the conference Aristotle Innovation Forum: From Aristotle to AI.

Organizers:

Xydopoulos Ioannis, Professor of Ancient Greek History, ixydopou@hist.auth.gr



Alagkiozidou Sofia, EDIP of Ancient Greek Language and Literature, alagsofia@hist.auth.gr

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MONDAY MAY 18, 2026					
14.00-14.15	Welcome addresses: Prof. Iakovos Michailidis, Vice Rector AUTH Prof. Panos Patsalas, Scientific Coordinator Aristotle Innovation Forum				
Session I	<i>Chair: Sofia Alagkiozidou</i>				
14.15-14.45	Andromache Karanika	University of California at Irvine, USA	The Killing of the Maids: Violence and Social and Gender Inequality in the Odyssey and beyond		<p>Andromache Karanika is Professor of Classics at the University of California, Irvine. She is the author of <i>Voices at Work: Women, Performance and Labor in Ancient Greece</i> (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014) and <i>Wedding, Gender and Performance in Ancient Greece</i> (Oxford University Press, 2024) and numerous articles on Greek epic and lyric poetry, pastoral poetry, late antique and Byzantine reception of Homer, and gender in antiquity. She co-edited a volume on <i>Emotional Trauma in Greece and Rome: Representations and Reactions</i> (Routledge, 2020 with V. Panoussi). She served as editor of TAPA (2018-2021), formerly known as Transactions of the American Philological Association) and President of CAMWS (Classical Association of the Middle West and South) in 2023–2024. She was a visiting Professor at Fudan University in China (2019) and recently a Lewis-Gibson Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge, UK (2025).</p>
14.45-15.15	Isabelle Kuenzer	University of Giessen, Germany	Becoming the Bride of Hades – Virgin Suicides in Ancient Greece		<p>Having completed her PhD at the University of Bonn, where her research focused on competitive behaviour among senators in ancient Rome, Isabelle Künzer assumed a postdoctoral research position at the University of Giessen. She obtained her habilitation with a thesis on the relationship between norms and emotions surrounding suicide in ancient Greece. She is currently leading a research project at the University of Giessen on how people in imperial Rome coped with electoral defeats and dealt with disappointment. Her research primarily focuses on the cultural history of the Roman Principate and on dying, death, and funerary practices in ancient Greece. She also studies the history of the body, the senses, and emotions in the ancient world. Her research is phenomenologically oriented in terms of cultural history and combines analyses of the ancient world with modern theories and the contemporary relevance of the research topics dealt with. In addition to the decidedly phenomenological orientation on</p>

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					a thematic level, human perception, emotions and horizons of knowledge and experience in ancient societies always play a role in her core research areas. For this reason, she regularly cross the bridge to cognitive science in her research projects and applies approaches from the field of distributed cognition to problems in ancient studies.
15.15-15.45	Nicole Diersen	University of Osnabrück, Germany	Murderous Hellenistic Queens: Visibility in Ancient Narratives and Their Re-creation in Contemporary Scholarship and AI		After studying Mathematics and History at Osnabrück University I wrote my doctoral thesis on Emotions of Politics in Republican Times also in Osnabrück. I am a research assistant in Ancient History at Osnabrück University since 2021 and I am about finishing my habilitation about murderous hellenistic queens, in which I focus gender-based violence. My research interests are gender, emotions and violence. I am also interested in the application of modern sociological concepts to historical studies (e.g. Michel Foucault or Pierre Bourdieu) and social practices and interaction processes. At the moment I organize a network on emotions in Antiquity.
15.45-16.15	Ioannis Xydopoulos	AUTh	Adea/Eyridice, queen of Macedonia?		Ioannis Xydopoulos is a Professor of Ancient Greek History at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. The author of several works on ancient Macedonia, beginning with his published thesis Social and Economic Relations between Macedonians and the Other Greeks, Thessaloniki 1998 (rev. ed. 2006), his interests later centered on issues of identity and perception, as in second book, The Perception of Ancient Thracians in Classical Greek Historiography, as well as on violence in Antiquity. He is the co-editor of the collective volume Xydopoulos, I. K. – Vlassopoulos, K. – Tounta, E. (eds.), Violence and Community: Law, Space and Identity in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean World, Routledge, London and New York 2017. He is currently the Head of the Section of Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine and Medieval History.
16.15-16.30	BREAK				

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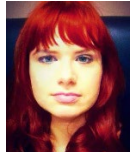

Session II		<i>Chair: Andromache Karanika</i>			
16.30-17.00	Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides	Macquarie University, Australia	Female Virtue from Plato to Hellenistic Queens and Gaming Teens		<p>Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides is Associate Professor at the Department of History and Archaeology, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. She holds a BA in Classics from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; an MA in Latin from Leeds University, UK; an MPhil in Ancient History from Macquarie University, Australia; and a PhD in Classics from the University of Kent at Canterbury, UK. Her research focuses on ancient leadership legacies, political and intellectual, and the role of ritual in shaping key conceptual metaphors about legitimate leaders. She has published on the role of regeneration narratives in managing political crises during the Hellenistic and Augustan periods. She also works on metaphors about philosophical inspiration in Plato and their reception by Christian authors from the time of the early Church to the Quattrocento. Her work has received funding by the Australian Research Council and more recently by the Gerda Henkel Foundation. Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides (0000-0002-1634-6941)–ORCID</p>
17.00-17.30	Sofia Alagkiozidou	AUTH	Searching for identity through a feminist interplay between prose and drama: Thebais upon Troy & Oedipus and Jocasta Lavdakide		<p>Dr. Sophia Alagkiozidou is special teaching staff of Ancient Greek Literature in the Department of History and Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She holds a Ph.D. in Classics from Royal Holloway, University of London, specializing in the reception of ancient drama, a MPhil in History of Philosophy, a MPhil in Classics (Latin) and a BA Hons in Greek Literature (Classics). She has also served as post-doctoral fellow at the Department of Philosophy of AUTH. Her extensive research and publication record includes six books and numerous articles focusing on Ancient Greek and Latin drama, historiography, and classical philosophy. With significant teaching experience in higher education, she has also served as Headteacher of the Greek Secondary School of London.</p>
17.30-18.00	Euphemia Karakantza	Classics, University of Patras	A Persian Antigone: female empowerment and political praxis in the current war against Iran		<p>Efimia Karakantza is Professor of Ancient Greek Literature at the University of Patras, Greece. She was the Chair of the Department of Philology of the same University in 2022-25. She was awarded the “Alexandros Papanoutsos” award of Excellence in Teaching for the academic year 2024. Her recent publications focus on meta-feminist and political readings of ancient Greek literature, mainly Homeric poetry and Greek tragedy, as well as their contemporary reception in literature, the</p>

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					performing arts and on screen. Her latest books are: 'Who Am I? (Mis)Identity and the Polis in Oedipus Tyrannus, HSS 86, Harvard UP 2020; Antigone, Routledge 2023; and (co-editor) Ancient Necropolitics. Maltreating the living, abusing the dead in Ancient Greece, Mnemosyne Supplement 492, Brill 2025.
18.00-18.30	Angeliki Pantartzidi, Marianna Vasileiou	Law School, AUTH; Medical School, AUTH	Tracing gender identity from Ancient Greece to contemporary Greek constitutional law	 	<p>Angeliki (Angie) Pantartzidi is a researcher and PhD candidate at the Faculty of Law at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She obtained her LLB from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in 2016 and afterwards obtained an interdisciplinary MSc on medical law and bioethics from the Faculty of Medicine in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She has collaborated with the Laboratory for the Study of Medical Law and Bioethics on numerous occasions and has published in many journals of constitutional law, human rights law, bioethics and gender and queer studies. She was one of the co-founders of the queer and feminist students union PHYL.IS. , where she served as general coordinator and later as an academic research coordinator. She specializes in research on human rights, queer and feminist bioethics and medical law.</p> <p>Marianna Vasileiou holds a Law Degree, as well as a Master of Laws (LLM) with a cum laude distinction in Penal Law and Criminology from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) School of Law. She also holds the Master of Bioethics (MBE) entitled "Contemporary Medical Acts: Legal Regulation and Bioethical Dimension" from the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies organized by the AUTH Schools of Law, Medicine, Dentistry and Theology with a summa cum laude distinction. She is currently a Lawyer licensed by the Thessaloniki Bar Association, a member of the AUTH Laboratory for the Research of Medical Law and Bioethics and a PhD candidate at the AUTH School of Medicine. Her scientific interests, apart from bioethics, include the conjunction of law, feminism and culture.</p>
18.30-19.00	Konstantinos Diados	AUTH	Power and prejudice: eunuchs, political critique, and gender interpretation in the Byzantine Empire		<p>Dr. Konstantinos Diados studied History and Archaeology and Law at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH). He holds postgraduate degrees in Byzantine History and Legal Theory, and earned his PhD in Byzantine History from the same institution. His research interests include the relationship between eunuchs and political power in Byzantium, the History of Law, and Sigillography.</p>

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TUESDAY MAY 19, 2026					
Session III	<i>Chair: Sofia Alagkiozidou</i>				
14.15-14.45	Evangelia Patera	AUTH	The Reception of the Athenian Gender Model in the West and Its Historical Ruptures		Evangelia Patera is a historian and a teacher of Greek language and history in secondary education. She is a PhD candidate at the Department of History and Archaeology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, specializing in Ancient Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Medieval History. She holds a master's degree in History and Archaeology in the same field, which is the basis of her doctoral research, as well as a master's degree in Theology (Ecclesiastical History). Her research focuses on historical studies in the Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine worlds, with a particular interest in historiography and history teaching. She has extensive teaching experience in secondary education since 2003 and is actively involved in innovative teaching practices.
14.45-15.15	Achilles Valetopoulos	University of Florida, USA	Cross-Dressing and Role Reversals in Plautus' Casina		Achilles Valetopoulos is a PhD student in Classical Studies at the University of Florida, where he teaches introductory Latin and serves as a teaching assistant for courses on Classics. He holds a BA in Classical Studies from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he graduated as valedictorian of the School of Philology (Class of 2024). His research interests include Ancient Greek and Latin comedy and satire, as well as gender and identity studies as applied to classical languages, alongside digital approaches to classical scholarship. His work is supported by honors including the Anastasia Vyzopoulou Award (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) and the Rothman Fellowship (University of Florida).
15.15-15.45	Martina Obino	University of Turin, Italy	Subverting the nuptial bed: Female agency and resistance to patriarchal normativity in Gregory of Tours' Gaul		Martina Obino holds an MA in Classical Philology from the University of Turin, with a thesis focusing on female sanctity in Gregory of Tours' <i>Miraculorum Libri</i> . She has also a second MA in Modern Philology, specializing in Italian lexicography. She is a teacher of Latin and Ancient Greek at the high school level. Her published work includes contributions to the <i>Archivio per il vocabolario storico italiano</i> (Vols. III and VI, 2020/2023) and the <i>Piccolo vocabolario dei sardismi in italiano</i> (Cagliari, 2025).

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15.45-16.15	Eleni Tounta	AUPh	<p>Constructing Colonized Masculinities in the Early Renaissance: Cristoforo Buondelmonti in Venetian Crete (Early Fifteenth Century)</p>		<p>Eleni Tounta is Professor of Western Medieval History in the Department of History and Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She pursued her under- and postgraduate studies in Greece, Belgium, and Germany. Her research focuses on the German kingdom and the Kingdom of Sicily during the High and Late Middle Ages, exploring topics of social and cultural history, as well as the interactions between the medieval West and the Byzantine Empire. Currently, she is engaged in research on travel writing, the formation of early ethnographic discourses, and colonialism in the late medieval eastern Mediterranean. Her recent publications include the monograph <i>The travels of Cristoforo Buondelmonti and Ciriaco d'Ancona in the Aegean Sea: Humanism, early colonial politics, and agency</i> (Routledge 2024)</p>
16.15-16.30	BREAK				
Session IV	<i>Chair: Eleni Tounta</i>				
16.30-17.00	Elisa Daga	Italian Archaeological School of Athens (IASA)	<p>Women's Trustworthiness? Informal Lending beyond Literary Representation</p>		<p>Elisa Daga obtained her PhD from the University of Pisa in 2024 with a dissertation on the so-called “prayers for justice”, offering the first corpus of these inscriptions and a historical interpretation of the crimes denounced in them. She is preparing the dissertation for publication as a monograph. Currently she is a postdoctoral fellow at the Italian Archaeological School at Athens. Her research is grounded in epigraphy and includes Spartan dedicatory practices, Hellenistic informal justice and economic practices, especially deposits and loans of textiles, as well as the relationship between literary representations and epigraphic evidence for women’s access to networks of <i>philia</i>.</p>
17.00-17.30	Anastasia Pantazopoulou	AUPh	<p>Rethinking Gender from Antiquity to the Present: Myth and Agency in Charlie Covell’s <i>Kaos</i> (2024)</p>		<p>Anastasia Pantazopoulou is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She earned her PhD in Classical Studies from the University of Florida, as well as an MA in Classics and a BA in Greek Philology from Aristotle University. Her research interests lie in the areas of Greco-Roman drama, classical reception, and digital humanities. Her current research project focuses on creating an interactive open-access educational platform that digitally maps and documents the multicultural reception of Euripides’ <i>Medea</i> on the modern theatrical stage.</p>

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17.30-18.00	Iraklis Stratakis	AUTH	From Tiresias to Digital Avatars: Emmanuel Rhoides' Pope Joan and the Gendered Construction of Authority in the Age of AI		Iraklis Stratakis is an undergraduate of Philology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, specializing in medieval and modern Greek studies. His research interests include 19th century Greek literature and comparative literature. His current work explores the interdisciplinary intersections between classical literary narratives and contemporary Artificial Intelligence, with a focus on gender performativity and the construction of authority.
18.00-18.30	Georgios Kraias	Hellenic Open University	From Euripides' Medea and the deception of women to Heiner Müller's Medea and the emancipation of women		Georgios Kraias (born 1981 in Serres/Greece) graduated from the Department of Philology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2003) and received his doctorate in philosophy from the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (2008) – thesis title: Epische Szenen in Tragischem Kontext: Untersuchung zu den Homer-Bezügen bei Aischylos, Frankfurt am Main: PeterLang Verlag 2011. He is also a graduate of the Department of German Language and Philology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2026). Since 2016 he is teaching at the Department of Theatre Studies of the Open University of Cyprus and since 2017 at the Department of Studies in Greek Culture of the Hellenic Open University. His research fields extend from Classical Studies to Modern Greek and Linguistic Studies, and his main body of work is located in ancient Greek tragedy and its reception. His works have been published in domestic and international journals (Ellinika, Logeion, Paravasis, Parnassos, Platon, Scene, Philologiki, Philologos, Philosophien, QUCC, Wiener Studien) and have been included in the proceedings of Panhellenic and international conferences. He is currently preparing a monograph on Heiner Müller's plays on ancient themes.

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The Killing of the Maids: Violence and Social and Gender Inequality in the *Odyssey* and beyond

Andromache Karanika

Department of Classics, University of California at Irvine, USA

This paper re-examines the execution of the maids in *Odyssey* 22 as a revealing site of intersecting social and gender inequality in archaic Greek epic. By also considering contemporary feminist reception which has revisited this episode, most notably through Margaret Atwood's *Penelopiad*, the treatment of the female slaves needs to receive more focused attention within the *Odyssey*'s own context and ideology. Rather than treating their deaths as a marginal episode, I argue that the poem authorizes extreme violence against enslaved women through interlocking systems of elite hierarchy and patriarchy. Central to this analysis is the use of the adverb βιαίως (*Od.* 22.37), which marks the maids' sexual encounters as acts of force, an admission within the text by Odysseus, who still proceeds to absorb the logic of betrayal and pollution in the subsequent slaughter of the suitors and the maids. This has been central in how the episode has been read and understood through centuries.

The slaughter of the female slaves has been examined within the punishment and revenge paradigms in current scholarship, with the maids' relations with the suitors regarded as constituting willing treachery. This paper explores the structural conditions of coercion and power asymmetry within an archaic *oikos*, where enslaved women as part of its workforce lack meaningful agency or protection. The *Odyssey* pays special attention to the female voice of the maids before the episode of the slaughter of the suitors, especially through a named figure Melantho, a figure who has been regarded as a negative doublet for Penelope and has used 'abusive' language towards the disguised Odysseus (*Od.* 18.327–36, 19.65–69). By contrast, the subsequent collective execution of the unnamed maids (*Od.* 22.465–72) exposes the depersonalization and fungibility of enslaved female bodies, whose deaths complete the poem's fantasy of revenge and purification. The maids' hanging anticipates tragic ways of killing a female body and needs closer analysis. While the suitors receive individuated violence, narratively elaborated, the epic's differential treatment of male elites and enslaved women becomes revealing. Special attention will be given to how the narrative discusses the "maids" with shifting language (γυναῖκες, δμωαί, or ἀμφίπολοι), which reveals further shifting attitudes toward domestic female workers. Ultimately, the killing of the maids reveals that gendered violence in Homeric epic is authorized not by individual or civic moral failure but by the structural inequalities governing status and sexuality in archaic society. The text's investment in its own elite order renders certain bodies killable, their erasure necessary to the restoration of elite stability.

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Becoming the Bride of Hades – Virgin Suicides in Ancient Greece

Isabelle Künzer

Justus Liebig University Giessen

In ancient Greek literature, virgins are often portrayed as aspiring to become the bride of Hades. This is a striking and colourful literary motif. However, the term does not exclusively refer to maidens who took their own lives; it is also employed more generally to describe instances of premature death among girls or young women, often due to illness. The presentation will focus on a group of suicides committed by virgins who were believed to be striving to become the bride of Hades. The following questions will be addressed, based on the idea that the journey to Hades becomes a symbolic marriage to the god of the underworld: What was the intended message behind becoming the bride of Hades? Was this a euphemistic description designed to conceal the maidens' inability to meet society's expectations? Did suicidal virgins actively reject their gender-related social roles? What was the rationale behind suicidal behaviour among maidens, and how did it relate to social norms? How were cases of suicide among virgins assessed and explained in medical literature? The presentation seeks to shed light on the tension between role-related expectations, the challenges associated with social norms and the potential for transgressing them.

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Murderous Hellenistic Queens: Visibility in Ancient Narratives and Their Re-creation in Contemporary Scholarship and AI

Nicole Diersen

University of Osnabrück, Germany

Men dominated and still dominate the historiographical landscape to this day – at first glance they are politically, militarily, and judicially visible. While Simone de Beauvoir (1949) in *Le Deuxième Sexe* addresses the general exclusion of women from public space, the analytical lens remains unclear. Despite this observation in the classical tradition – especially in Hellenism – female visibility emerges: women appear in many sources when we adopt new material and methodical approaches. Thus, this paper combines a discourse-analytical approach with a source-critical method to demonstrate the construction of gender in ancient narrative texts and in modern AI models.

Epigraphic and numismatic material, as well as everyday documents illustrate that women – usually elite women and Queens – not only possessed symbolic status, but also real political and military agency as rulers, as Elizabeth Carney (2013; 2019), Sabine Müller (2009) and Christiane Kunst (2021) have demonstrated. Women, particularly Queens, are also visible in historiographical texts through instrumental narratives of violence – Queens are portrayed as murders in many cases (27 cases). Thus, a still-overlooked aspect is the disproportionate depiction of female murders in the ancient texts about the Hellenism. This aspect is evaluated extremely negatively by the ancient authors and, according to them, by early-modern researchers. It may have been served as a tool for defamation and discrediting women. Hence, the hypothesis of this paper is that female-murder narratives are presented in detail to delegitimize women's agency and power. But at the same time, they become inevitably highly visible.

By analyzing murder episodes, comparing the sources of Hyginus and Strabo, and presenting a case study of the murder of her husband Antiochus II by Laodike I, this paper will examine how these ancient depictions reveal inconsistencies across the narratives and by doing so, highlight the agency of the Hellenistic Queens. Furthermore, it will be shown what picture modern AI picks up and how it reproduces and transforms these ancient stereotypes of defamation in the worst case. Finally, the aim of this paper is to raise awareness of the continuities and ruptures of gender ideas from Antiquity to the digital age, showing that ancient – possibly misguided – gender narratives still operate today – even through AI. Thus, the paper calls for active measures to counter them.

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Adea/Eyridice, queen of Macedonia?

Ioannis Xydopoulos

Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Adea Eurydice occupies a distinctive position in the political landscape of post-Alexandrian Macedonia. As the wife of Philip III Arrhidaeus, she was formally queen consort rather than a sovereign ruler. Philip III, elevated to the throne after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE, was widely regarded as incapable of independent governance due to cognitive impairment. Consequently, effective authority resided with competing regents during the early phases of the Successor period.

Within this context, Eurydice emerges as an unusually assertive political actor. Ancient sources depict her as actively engaged in military and administrative affairs, including direct appeals to Macedonian troops—an extraordinary departure from conventional gender norms in the Macedonian court. Her interventions were particularly visible in opposition to the regent Polyperchon, against whom she sought to defend what she presented as the legitimate authority of the reigning king and his household.

Although Eurydice exercised a degree of de facto influence that, at moments, approximated sovereign authority, she was never formally recognized as monarch in her own right. Her position remained structurally constrained by the prevailing framework of kingship, which continued to vest legitimacy in the Argead royal line and, nominally, in her husband. Moreover, her authority was continually challenged within the broader context of the Wars of the Successors, where military power and shifting alliances determined political outcomes.

Her bid for power ultimately collapsed with the intervention of Olympias in 317 BCE. Olympias secured the execution of Philip III and compelled Eurydice to commit suicide, thereby eliminating a rival claimant to royal authority. Eurydice's career thus illustrates both the possibilities and limitations of female political agency in Hellenistic Macedonia: while never a reigning queen, she briefly approached the practical exercise of royal power under exceptional circumstances.

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Female Virtue from Plato to Hellenistic Queens and Gaming Teens

Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides

Macquarie University, Australia

The paper explores the intellectual background in which early Hellenistic queens, like Phila, Stratonike, Arsinoe and Berenice, appeared to be yielding political power, registering in the consciousness of their subjects the prominent role of women in contemporary politics. Starting with Plato's groundbreaking, even if inconsistent, ideas about the ability of women to claim virtue (chiefly by embracing masculine ideals of virtue), Aristotle contends that while women can have virtue, they will be never allowed to pursue it in the political sphere given their weaker nature. Nevertheless, free men ought to listen to the views of free women for everyone to have the best life possible. In this context, it comes as no surprise that Hellenistic rulers were keen to employ their queens to legitimate the newly established Greco-Macedonian dynasties through soft diplomacy, with the queens playing an increasingly popular role in the public image of the regimes. While, however, the role of the queens in enhancing the profile of the kings as virtuous rulers is readily evident, establishing their own agency remains controversial. After summarizing the arguments, highlighting the importance of having Seleucid and Ptolemaic queens claiming more public space from the audiences' point of view, the paper will trace the reception of these debates in the modern era, and particularly, in the burgeoning field of gaming. Here, scholars are faced with the rapid-fire popularity of the Hellenistic dynasties yet at a time of rising chauvinism: as a result, Hellenistic queens are represented as overly ambitious, manipulative, and murderous. Thus, in virtual reality female political virtue is registered in deeply troublesome ways. By drawing on Plato's recognition of the fundamental similarities between virtue and virtuality, the paper suggests that VR and AI can and should be used to bolster our confidence in female virtue and its political potential.

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Searching for Identity Through a Feminist Interplay Between Prose and Drama:

Thebais upon Troy & Oedipus and Jocasta Lavdakide

Sofia Alagkiozidou

Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

My presentation, titled ‘Searching for Identity Through a Feminist Interplay Between Prose and Drama: *Thebais upon Troy and Oedipus and Jocasta Lavdakide*’, attempts to shed light on an intellectually intriguing, though severely under-researched, area of classical reception—namely, the feminist retellings of classical myth in Modern Greek by distinctive female voices articulated in a form that intermingles both prose and drama. As a case study, I explore the book titled *Thebais upon Troy and Oedipus and Jocasta Lavdakide*, written by the female author and playwright Demetra Metta and published in 2019. This work has a particularly interesting and innovative form, which allows a radical transformation of the classical myth to unfold through a contemporary female perspective. My argument is that the intermingling of prose and drama facilitates the reversal of the mythological and literary canon, thereby opening the possibility for new perceptions of temporality and causality to be imagined and articulated by a voice emphatically identified as female. The purpose of this complex and sophisticated construction is to express a multilayered personal and political search for identity that permeates the entire book. I explore how the hybrid genre—prose as narration and drama as enactment—functions as an effective medium for presenting the characters’ struggles to define or redefine their identities, a process that highlights the performativity of gender roles. I also examine how the unfolding of the search for identity echoes feminist problematics, particularly those articulated in third-wave and transnational feminism. I analyze the book through a combination of close reading and feminist theory. My analysis follows the structure of the book: after analyzing its constitutive parts, I examine the type(s) of feminism that can be traced in the work as a whole.

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A Persian Antigone: female empowerment and political praxis in the current war against Iran

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Few days ago, I came across an exquisite poem written by an Iranian poetess, theater director, and actress who lives in France. The title of the poem refers explicitly to the figure of the ancient Antigone of the Theban legend reframed within the oldest traditional Persian story-telling technique, named Naqqāli. Here are the first lines of her poem:

The Naqqāli Antigone Yeki Boud, Yeki Naboud. Far, far away in time, in the city... of Thebes. Far, far away, in the time when everything had a name from God A name for love, one for justice, one for war... Far, far away in the memory... of all women who break free There was, there is, there always will be... our mother. She is our mother, the mother of all women who break free. She is our mother... Her name is, and it is also my name. Her name is, my mother, ANTIGONE. It is also my name. I bear my mother's name. I am ANTIGONE.¹

The poem tells the story of the ancient heroine, naming her as the foremother “of all women who break free”, and places her action within the framework of the current war against Iran. The gender-generated resistance voiced by Antigone focuses on the notion of divine justice, family rights, and solidarity among the people. Aside from the harmonious flow of the narrative itself, the Naqqāli Antigone connects a contemporary female voice, who sees her native land ravaged by war inflicted by Americano-Israeli powers, with a long line of Persian traditional story-tellers ³/₄mainly men³/₄ and the ingenious reception of the 2,500-year-old Greek female heroine. The double female presence (the contemporary poetess and the ancient mythical figure) negotiates the past and the present, the right and wrong, the powerful and the powerless, the duty and the law, freedom and oppression, life and death through the medium of the empowerment of female agency. The paper will tackle this empowerment following the different strands of the two ancient types of story-telling that bridge the gap across times, cultures, people and lands. As the poem goes:

Listen carefully to this story that will endure through all time, and that everyone still knows... Listen carefully because it is our story... It is the story of laws that are contrary to our feelings. The story of kings who place themselves above everyone else. It is an eternal story where what I think is not acceptable. It is the eternal story of a struggle.

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Tracing gender identity from Ancient Greece to contemporary Greek constitutional law

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From antiquity to the present day, the treatment of individuals who do not conform to dominant gender stereotypes and gender expression norms has exhibited distinct characteristics and significant variations depending on the prevailing social and historical context. With a primary focus on the Greek context and drawing on complementary comparative anthropological and sociological approaches, this paper identifies narratives and practices related to transgender identities and gender transition, highlighting a historically more complex and less linear understanding of gender.

The paper then examines the evolution of both social and institutional responses to gender diversity in contemporary Greece, with particular emphasis on the interpretive safeguarding of gender identity under the provisions of the Greek Constitution. Special attention is given to Articles 4 and 5, concerning the principles of equality before the law and the free development of personality. The paper argues that, despite historical discontinuities and ongoing socio-political barriers, the current constitutional framework can serve as a dynamic tool for securing the protection of all gender identities. At the same time, it underscores the need for further interpretive and institutional reinforcement of gender identity protection, in light of developments in international human rights law.

Keywords: *gender identity; transgender; constitutional law; gender expression; human rights*

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Power and prejudice: eunuchs, political critique, and gender interpretation in the Byzantine Empire

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Amid ongoing debates about gender and non-binary classifications, this paper examines the status of eunuchs in the Byzantine Empire. While some scholars have proposed that eunuchs constituted a “third gender,” we take a more considered approach, examining both the insights and the limits of such interpretations.

Eunuchs, though biologically male, displayed distinctive physical characteristics and occupied certain roles within mostly imperial settings. Crucially, they also formed a powerful political elite, holding positions of close proximity to the emperor. At the same time, they served as scapegoats in moments of political tension, with hostile portrayals reflecting broader criticism of court politics. In such cases, bias against eunuchs may function less as evidence of gender categorization than as a rhetorical vehicle for political critique. The powerful court eunuchs also provide a valuable window into how eunuchs in Byzantium may have understood their own identities.

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The Reception of the Athenian Gender Model in the West and Its Historical Ruptures

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This study explores the historical reception and transformations of the Athenian gender model in Western thought, from classical antiquity to modern gender theory. The intention is not to cover the subject completely and exhaustively, but to present the broader framework of gender difference in two different historical periods. The starting point is the conception of gender difference in classical Athens, as a natural, essential and hierarchical category, integrated into a teleological system where nature determines each individual's role and position in the political and social order. This Athenian model extends beyond its original historical context, but deeply influences medieval theology, modern political theory and the constitution of Western institutions, contributing to the naturalization of gender hierarchy. In Aristotle's work, women are defined as biologically and functionally connected to the household and reproduction, while men are associated with reason, political participation and the public sphere. The study argues that there are certain tensions and isolated cases of women, who resist the dominant ideology, but they are not sufficient to challenge the essence and the core of this perception. The first significant cracks in this model appear with the modern notions of individuality and universal rights, without however completely overturning its essentialist core. The radical rupture occurs in the 20th century, especially through feminist and post-structuralist theory. In Judith Butler's thinking, gender is not a pre-existing substance but a performative process; it is constituted through repeated social and linguistic practices that create the illusion of stability. This shift deconstructs the connection between nature and normativity, highlighting the role of power in the construction of identities. Through a comparative and historical-interpretive approach, the study highlights that the contemporary fluidity of gender identities is not a simple departure from ancient tradition, but the result of a long process of negotiation, transformation and critical revision of the very meaning of "nature" and social order.

Keywords: ancient greek model, Aristotle, Judith Butler, gender performativity, post-structuralism, gender identity

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Cross-Dressing and Role Reversals in Plautus' *Casina*

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Casina tells the story of a household thrown into disarray when its master, Lysidamus, attempts to initiate a sexual relationship with a slave-girl, Casina, who never appears on stage herself but is represented through the cross-dressed performance of another slave, Chalinus. As Frangoulidis (2024) suggests, the plot revolves around the competing schemes of Lysidamus and his wife, Cleostrata, each trying to control Casina's marriage to serve their own (sexual) aims. The turning point comes when Cleostrata orchestrates Chalinus's cross-dressing and his staged marriage to Olympio, Lysidamus's servant-pawn. This comic deception exposes deep tensions in gender norms and invites reflection on how power and identity operate within the Roman household.

This gender disruption becomes more meaningful when read against modern scholarship on ancient gender and sexuality. Foundational studies by Dover (1978) and Foucault (1985) defined gender and sexuality through a static, penetration-focused model, dividing roles into active (masculine) and passive (feminine). Later scholars challenged this binary opposition, emphasizing fluidity, performativity, and the social construction of gender. Gender has increasingly being seen not as fixed, but as enacted through behavior and shifting power relations. In this light, Rosivach's (1998) work on sexual exploitation and Richlin's (1997) call for a "body history" offer more inclusive perspectives. While Williams (1999), Christenson (2019) and Philippides (2015) touch on *Casina*'s gender dynamics, more attention should be paid to how Chalinus's cross-dressing challenges normative expectations and pushes Lysidamus and Cleostrata to the limits of their gender identities.

From this perspective, the paper examines how accusations of effeminacy emerge when established roles break down. Lysidamus's failure to dominate Chalinus/Casina initiates a reversal of traditional gender dynamics. Chalinus asserts physical control during the wedding-night scene, while Lysidamus's passivity is marked by the blows he receives and his inability to impose his will, that is, to penetrate. This failed encounter results in Lysidamus's apparent loss of *integritas* and *imperium*, core Roman components of masculinity that signify control over others and oneself. His inability to maintain these qualities places him at risk of being considered as effeminate, not due to any homosexual act, which never occurs, but through his conduct and loss of authority. This disruption also forces Cleostrata into the dominant household role traditionally assigned to the *pater familias*. It is through her actions that a semblance of a restoration of comic ideals and a

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conventional comic resolution are achieved. Plautus, by staging gender liminality, suggests that gender is not defined by sexual role or preference alone, but by a continuous (re)negotiation of gender identity through performative conduct and action. *Casina* thus offers a theatrical space in which Roman ideals of gender and power are tested, blurred, and ironically reaffirmed.

Key words: Gendered identity, masculinity, femininity, effeminacy, Plautus, Roman comedy, cross-dressing.

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Subverting the nuptial bed. Female agency and resistance to patriarchal normativity in Gregory of Tours' Gaul

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In the Gallo-Roman and Merovingian society of the 6th century AD described by Gregory of Tours, the survival of traditional aristocratic values frequently clashes with the nascent ideals of Christian asceticism. This contribution aims to analyze the tension between the social obligation of bloodline continuity and the individual choice of virginity, through an emblematic case study recorded in both the *Historia Francorum* (I, 47) and the *Liber in gloria confessorum* (31).

The protagonist is a young noblewoman forced into an arranged marriage to strengthen the ties between her own and another aristocratic family. Obligated to obey her father's will and deprived of sovereignty over her own body within a patriarchal system that treats her as a commodity, the girl has no choice but to accept the union.

Yet, from within the "golden cage" of marriage, the young woman manages to practice a form of active resistance, creating a breach to reclaim control over her person and her body. Using religious discourse as a tool for negotiation, she attempts to persuade her new husband not to consummate the marriage. The man initially tries to dissuade her, because as only children they have a duty to carry on their noble lineage; however, ultimately moved by the depth of her words, her profound faith, and her intellectual acuity, he embraces virginity. Under the woman's careful guidance, their bond is transformed into an egalitarian relationship between frater and soror, united not only by noble birth and great wealth but, above all, by equal - if not superior, on her part - intellect. Through a literary and anthropological analysis of Gregory's passages, this paper highlights how the Christian ideal of equality before God offered women an unprecedented space for agency. This subversion of the thalamus represents an early sign of discontinuity and rupture within traditional gender structures, allowing a conscious form of female subjectivity to emerge in the Early Middle Ages.

KEYWORDS Gregory of Tours; Female Agency; Merovingian Gaul; Chaste Marriage; Patriarchal Normativity; Asceticism

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Constructing Colonized Masculinities in the Early Renaissance: Cristoforo Buondelmonti in Venetian Crete (Early Fifteenth Century)

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The Florentine priest Cristoforo Buondelmonti, a participant in the early Renaissance humanist movement, visited Venetian Crete at the beginning of the fifteenth century and recorded his travel experiences in a narrative that reveals the antiquarian, geographical, and ethnographical interests of early humanism. The present paper examines Buondelmonti's narrative strategies in constructing the masculinities of the native Cretans in contrast to those of the dominant Venetian colonists, in order to explore how gender definitions were implicated in the formation of colonial discourse. The paper argues that representations of colonized masculinities were shaped by the reconfiguration both of colonial relations in the Aegean and of gender hierarchies in the Italian cities, the latter influenced by the revival of classical cultural frameworks of political and social organization.

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Women's Trustworthiness? Informal Lending beyond Literary Representation

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This paper explores the representation of female *dikaiosynē* in Classical and Hellenistic Greece, focusing in particular on *pistis* “trustworthiness” as a gendered category. It begins from a striking textual parallel between the playwright Aristophanes and the neoplatonic philosopher Iamblichus, both of which employ similar formulations to depict exchanges of clothing among women. While these passages have often been read as either comic exaggeration or idealised philosophical imagery, this study argues that they point to an under-documented sphere of women’s social and economic interaction: informal textile lending. Thus, moving beyond literary representation, the analysis integrating epigraphic and literary evidence assesses how informal lendings exchanges among women actually functioned in Classical and Hellenistic Greece. The research demonstrates the centrality of trustworthiness within this space of interaction, documenting both successful transactions and problematic outcomes. In this context, trustworthiness emerges not merely as an abstract moral quality, but as a practical and relational virtue underpinning everyday cooperation. By reassessing literary portrayals on female lendings alongside informations gained by material sources the paper illuminates networks of female *philia* that extended beyond the *oikos* and considers how the attribution of trustworthiness intersected with the representation of female *dikaiosynē*, revealing the normative expectations placed upon women within their communities. Combining philological and socio-historical approach, the study contributes to discussions of gender as a category of analysis, highlighting how virtue language both structured and reflected women’s lived experiences in antiquity.

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Rethinking Gender from Antiquity to the Present: Myth and Agency in Charlie Covell’s *Kaos* (2024)

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This paper examines a contemporary reworking of Greco-Roman mythology through the lens of gender, offering a feminist and queer re-reading of ancient narratives in modern media. Charlie Covell’s Netflix-original series, *Kaos*, is a darkly comedic reimagining of Greco-Roman mythology that focuses on dysfunctional relationships and their impact both within the realm of the gods and in that of humans. A tyrannical Zeus in a midlife crisis starts spiraling into paranoia when the ancient prophecy that governs his existence and foresees his downfall seems to be coming true. When a wrinkle appears on his forehead, Zeus interprets it as the beginning of his end and frantically tries to avert it. In *Kaos*, as in Greek thought, prophecies are central to the storyworld because they highlight the role of fate and the interconnectedness of people and events. As it is soon revealed, three mortal characters, Eurydice, Ariadne, and Caeneus, share the same prophecy with Zeus—without knowing it—and are destined to reshape the future of humanity by defying him. The Greco-Roman stories of Eurydice, Ariadne, and Caeneus feature the eponymous characters as marginalized or liminal, gendered-othered figures, with little to no agency over their stories. However, in *Kaos*, their narratives are rewritten in ways that provide them with agency over their identities and central roles within a plot that threatens Zeus’s patriarchal order. In this paper, I discuss how the series reverses key elements of the mythological storylines of these three figures, rendering them empowered agents who challenge both ancient and reimagined structures of gendered hierarchy. I begin my analysis by tracing the central differences between the myth-story and the series-story of each of the three protagonists to demonstrate how, in *Kaos*, they are established as active agents. I explain that *Kaos*’s Eurydice is a woman trapped in her marriage while still alive and, after her death, unwilling to return to Earth. Yet, once she realizes that the divine world is corrupted and she is one of those who can change that, she steps back into the realm of the living and asks Orpheus to turn and look at her, becoming the subject in the narrative—in contrast to her passive role in ancient sources (Ov. Met.10.1-85; Verg. G.4.453-527). Similarly, Ariadne is a woman trapped in a life designed for her, forced to exist in the shadow of her twin brother Glaucus, whom she supposedly killed. Yet, when she discovers that this was her father’s scheme to secure power and serve the gods, Ariadne kills him and remains in Crete—unlike her mythical counterpart (Plut. Vit.Thes.20.1)—as a political leader planning to destroy Olympus. Finally, Caeneus is a transgender man marginalized within the norms of his Amazon society, whose members murdered him after his transition. While the Greco-Roman Caeneus relies on Poseidon to make him male and is subsequently framed as a hyper-masculine hero (Ov. Met. 12.429–535), *Kaos*’s Caeneus transforms his own body (O’Neill

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2024) and resists incorporation into patriarchal heroic models, instead remaining in the Underworld to expose Zeus's system of power.

Examining in parallel the nature and actions of their renewed selves, I suggest that the three characters form a line of empowered figures who contest the “cosmic order” that Zeus embodies (Allan 2006), both in the series and the Greco-Roman mythological universe. Drawing on feminist theoretical frameworks on the critical role of female genealogies and relations among women in reconsidering the male-centered “cosmic order,” as articulated by Luce Irigaray (1993) and Gail Schwab (2010), I further argue that this challenge emerges through the bonds formed among gendered-othered figures in the storyworld. The destabilization of Olympian patriarchy in the final episode can thus be understood as the result of a “utopia of relationships” (Schwab 2010), grounded in reconfigured alliances (e.g. Eurydice–Cassandra, Ariadne–Andromache) and rearticulated genealogies (between Eurydice, Ariadne, Caeneus, and their mothers respectively).

Finally, I conclude that Covell's reworking of familiar Greco-Roman myths not only challenges traditional male-centered narratives and structures of authority but also demonstrates how ancient gender paradigms can be reinterpreted through contemporary feminist and queer perspectives, inviting the audience to reflect on the gender norms and power dynamics of their society.

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From Tiresias to Digital Avatars: Emmanuel Rhoides' Pope Joan and the Gendered Construction of Authority in the Age of AI

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In ancient Greek mythology, the figure of Tiresias represents disembodied prophetic knowledge, a figure associated with embodied transitions across sexed identities and prophetic authority. In the contemporary era of Artificial Intelligence (AI), we are once again confronted with forms of "disembodied" intelligence. However, rather than embodying gender fluidity, modern algorithms are frequently subjected to anthropomorphic, gendered projections that reproduce traditional hierarchies: feminized voices (e.g., Siri, Alexa) are typically relegated to the roles of digital "assistants," whereas male personas are often ascribed to roles of institutional authority and expertise. While the sociology of AI has extensively analysed this "algorithmic performativity," there is a noticeable absence of interdisciplinary dialogue with the literary genealogies of gender disguise. Specifically, few studies examine how earlier literary texts had already deconstructed the mechanisms through which a female intellect "hacks" patriarchal systems of power by adopting a male "avatar." This paper argues that Emmanuel Rhoides' satirical masterpiece, *Pope Joan* (1866), serves as a crucial literary nexus between ancient concepts of gender fluidity and contemporary digital culture. In Rhoides' narrative, Joan functions as an analog precursor to digital disguise: she weaponises the male gender as an artificial "interface" to bypass the exclusionary "software" of the papal institution and seize infallible authority. Drawing upon methodologies from Comparative Literature and Gender Studies, this paper will examine how Rhoides' satire strips gender of its biological essentialism, exposing it instead as a constructed protocol of power. Ultimately, the paper will explore how this nineteenth-century literary subversion provides a vital theoretical vocabulary for critiquing contemporary representations of gender, agency, and authority in AI-driven models.

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From Euripides' Medea and the deception of women to Heiner Müller's Medea and the emancipation of women

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No matter how much one searches ancient tragedy, only one true feminist will be found: Medea. And this is because only she dared to deny her feminine position and ask, even mentally, to join the battle alongside the men (vv. 250-251). She alone also managed to break the famous paternal line, killing Jason's (male) children and interrupting his evolutionary continuity. Beyond these textual data, historical data are of particular importance, as Euripides teaches his Medea in 431 BC, just three years after the tumultuous trial of Aspasia, to whose circle he belonged. It is therefore easily assumed that the poet sketches his heroine according to the subversive teachings of his spiritual model. But perhaps this is precisely why tragedy only took third place in the dramatic festivals, since with its feminist perspective it was proclaimed to overthrow the dominant patriarchy.

However, the stigma of Medea as a feminist has since crystallized as an inherent characteristic of her, as for the first time the female voice-cry was heard dynamically. In this pattern, almost the entire reception of Euripidean tragedy has flowed in the modern era, culminating in the trilogy of the East German Heiner Müller (1929-1996) *Despoiled Shore Medea Material Landscape with Argonauts* (1982). If in Euripides the deception of the woman prevails, as her betrayal by Jason seems to trigger her every thought and action, in Müller the emancipation of the woman prevails, as her dynamics are now such that they eliminate the man and make the woman the dominant figure in the play.

This presentation will initially explore the social position of Medea in Euripides' tragedy; that is, to what extent does it echo the historical era of Pericles' Athens and how does it operate intradramatically. Subsequently, her evolution in Müller's dramaturgy will be analyzed in detail, focusing on the gender dimension and the recognition of women in the modern era. The main objective is to closely monitor the transformation of a woman through the centuries from a latent to a vibrant feminist.