



Images of Women in Athenian Literature

Women in Antiquity | Meeting #8

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Upcoming Dates

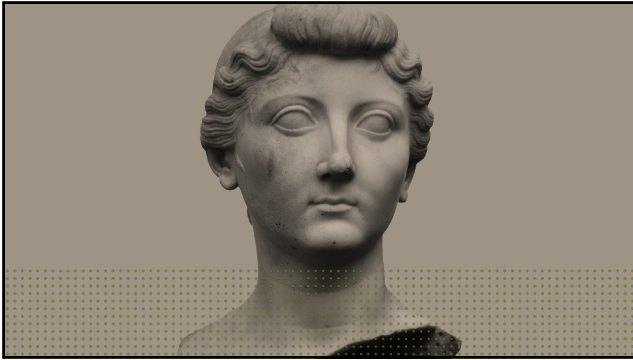
- Monday, October 26
Proposal due
- Monday, December 7
Position Paper due
- Tuesday, December 15
Final Exam
- Sunday, November 1
Responses for Week 8 Due

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Five things today

- The Position Paper
- Athenian philosophy
- Women in Tragedy
- Antigone*
- Medea*

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Quiz #6 | Women in Athenian Literature

- According to Pomeroy, Athenian tragedies often showed women as forceful and rebellious because the plays' female protagonists
 - ☒ represented the needs of private life and family against the power of the state
 - were there to be destroyed and put in their place at the end of the play
 - accurately depicted Athenian women's agency and active public participation in real life
 - were actually gods dressed as women
- In the play *Antigone*, Antigone's sister Ismene insists that Antigone must not
 - delay in burying their brother
 - ☒ disobey Creon's ban on burying their brother
 - offer to fight Creon in single combat
 - visit Egypt during the tourist season
- In the play *Medea*, the legendary hero Jason
 - kills his own sons to spite Medea
 - ☒ has sailed away and is not present in the play
 - lets aside his foreign wife, Medea, and marries a princess to get ahead
 - dies at the end
- According to Pomeroy, all of the following are true about Plato's utopian exercise, *Republic* Book V
 - No private property meant there was no need for monogamous marriage
 - Plato thought men and women were similar in nature apart from their roles in begetting children
 - ☒ prostitution was common, with harlots accounting for one-sixth of the republic's female population
 - Women were included in the ruling elite class, the guardians
- The comedy *Lysistrata*, by Aristophanes, is about women ending a 20-year war by
 - ☒ denying sex to the men until they declare peace
 - taking over the fighting of the war and winning
 - luring the men to make peace by giving them fine new clothes and horses
 - appealing to the gods to intervene and make the men more rational and less aggressive

Extra Credit

EC: The play *Medea* ends with Medea escaping in a flying chariot. What do you think this tells us about the play's sympathies and message?

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Questions from the Responses

- Why did Pentheus seem to greatly trust someone who he had not only just met, but also had just denied?
- Were there other plays that involved pushing against the misogynist views of Athens and how did they turn out?

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Questions about whatever

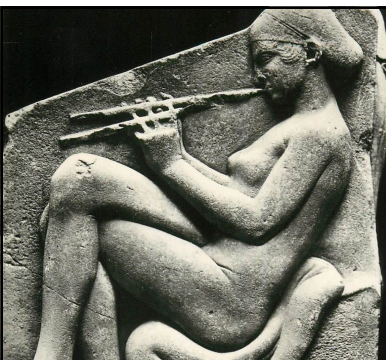


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Private life in Athens



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Hetaerae

- Paid companions in Athens
- Educated and expected to converse on social and cultural topics
- Outside the social structure of marriage and families

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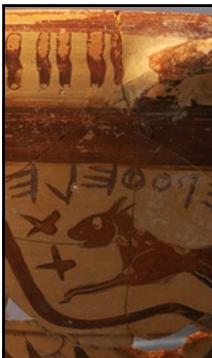
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Classical Athens

- Expansion and patronage of creative expression
- Build up and expansion of Athenian monuments and structures
- Escalation of Athenian influence

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Natural philosophy

- Chaos ("expanse")
 - Primordial void / unformed mass
 - First thing to exist
 - First gods created from its substance
- Cosmos ("order")
 - Order and structure brought to the chaos
- Strong contrast
 - Chaos is the alternative to cosmos
 - Chaos is before / outside
 - Earth (place of order) vs. space (above or below)
 - Discussed in *Being*
- Nous ("awareness")
 - Human genius
 - Faculty of the human mind necessary for understanding what is true or real
 - Source of reason and cosmos

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Secondary Source Reading

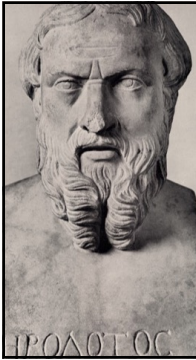
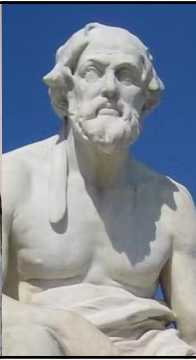
Voula Lambropoulou

"Some Pythagorean Female Virtues"

- Pythagoras – looking for a rational way of living and constructing a community
- Women have distinctive virtues characteristic of them
 - Generosity and bravery
 - Moderation, keeping an even keel
 - These exist to help ground and smooth out the wildnesses of men
- Pythagoreans believed that women are the foundation of society by being the foundation of family and marital relationship



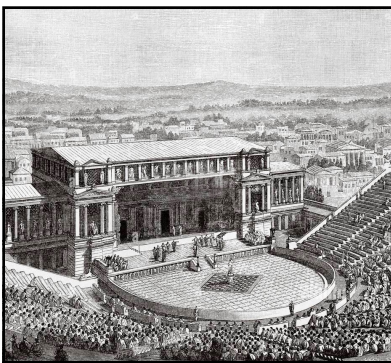
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**Historians:
Herodotus and
Thucydides**

- Herodotus
 - “Father of history”
 - Told the story of the Persian Wars
 - Social, anecdotal and subjective
 - Focus on human nature
- Thucydides
 - Main source for the Peloponnesian War
 - Evidence-based and objective
 - Focus on making an argument and supporting with narrative evidence

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**Tragedy and
comedy**

- Interactive, communal creative expression
- Tragedy
 - Suffering of the community due to a selfish choice
 - Reinforcement of communal values
- Comedy
 - Targeting of a social issue or problematic person
 - Questioning and subjective
 - Call to arms

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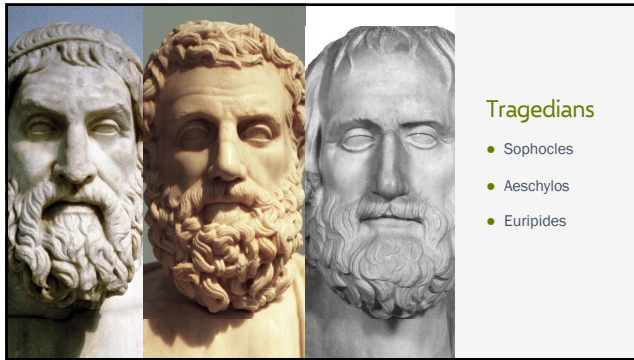
Secondary Source Reading

Helene Foley
“The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama”

- How to approach the understanding of:
 - how women are presented in literature and
 - how we can gain insight into real women in Greek society
- Conclusion:
 - Simple relationships are upended in drama
 - For the purpose of understanding what is the norm and how it is violated
- The simplest conflict is two people already connected by family
 - Orestes / Agamemnon
 - Orestes / Clytemnestra
- These private relationships reflect, parallel, and twist the problems in public society



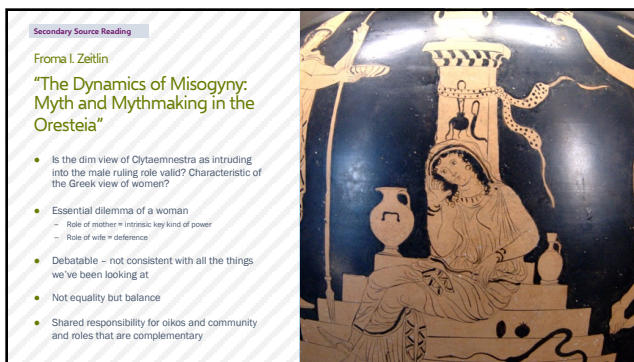
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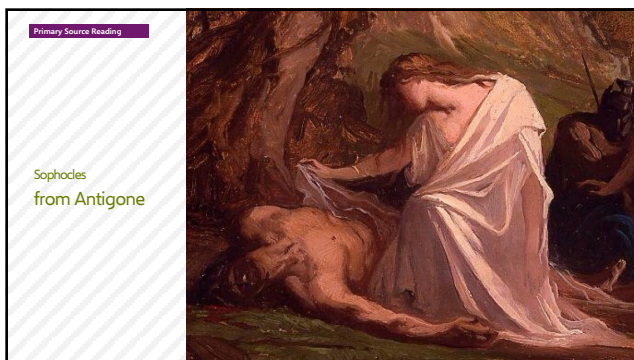
Tragedians

- Sophocles
- Aeschylus
- Euripides

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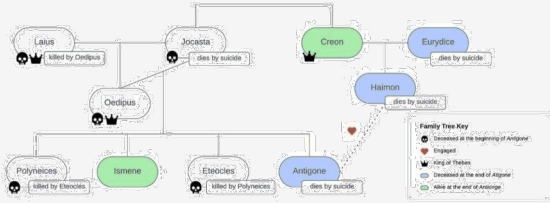


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Antigone's family tree



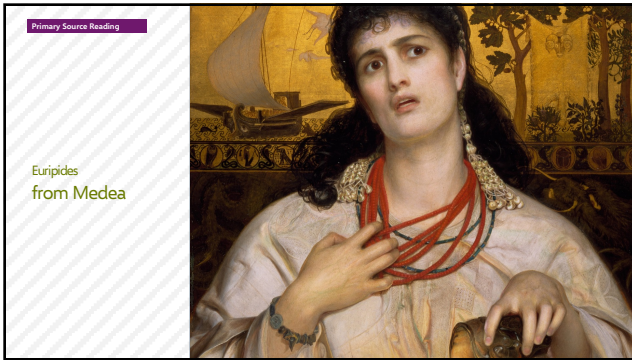
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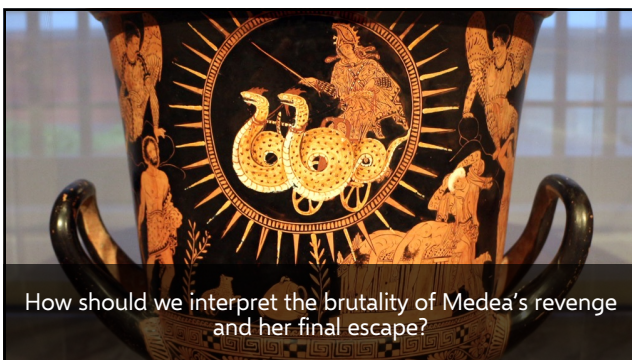
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Dramatic characters are dramatic

- Cannot map literary figures onto ordinary society
 - As with mythology, literary figures are a response and a critique
- Stories in drama are deliberately designed to be abnormal
 - Exaggerated circumstances and especially exaggerated characteristics

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Women in Athenian Literature

- Especially true of female characters
 - Antigone and Medea are extremely unusual figures
 - Plights are extremes and abnormal
 - Designed to throw into relief the contrasting circumstances people would be familiar with by presenting aberrant examples
- Cannot say "this is what women's lives were like"
 - Instead, this is what provokes a response in contrast to the reality of women's lives

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The Position Paper

- Making an argument
- Giving three reasons
- Supporting with evidence from primary and secondary source

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Guidance and resources

Requirements for All Papers

All written assignments for this course MUST adhere to these requirements or be subject to a workload grade. Check for all of the following before submitting any paper.

Before starting on your assignment, I urge you to watch the videos below. They're very short, and they cover the key requirements with tips on how to make them happen and avoid setbacks to your grade.



[View all videos](#)

Position Paper

WHAT IS A PAPER?

- **Select the subject.** The instructor will explain what the paper is about in the lecture and what the assignment is in terms of argument, evidence, and structure.
- **Before you submit, make sure your essay meets the requirements for all papers.** Including formatting, structure, and evidence.
- **Put them in the container and.** All papers must be in the container and format. You will be marked down drastically if your paper is not properly cited.

[Watch the video: The Position Paper](#)

Research and Citations Center

Citations are absolutely essential in any academic paper. But guidelines are especially in history. In this video, we'll show you how to find the right source, whether it's a direct quote, a paraphrase, or even just an idea.

[Watch the video: Research and Citations Center](#)

Writing a Position Paper for History Students

With the Position Paper, you'll be able to see the best history, what the best history is, and how to write it.

[Watch the video: Writing a Position Paper for History Students](#)

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Structure of an essay

Introduction

- State the problem (some say ... others say ...)
- Give your thesis (I believe ...)

First reason

- ASSERTION #1
- Evidence from primary or secondary sources
- Discussion of how the evidence demonstrates your thesis

Second reason

- ASSERTION #2
- Evidence from primary or secondary sources
- Discussion of how the evidence demonstrates your thesis

Third reason

- ASSERTION #3
- Evidence from primary or secondary sources
- Discussion of how the evidence demonstrates your thesis

Conclusion

- Address counterarguments
- Connect your "reason" sections together
- Restate your thesis as having been demonstrated

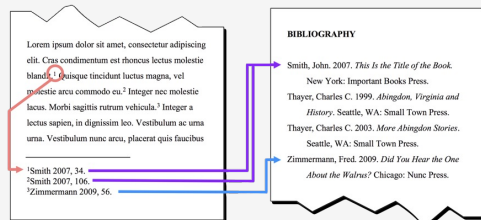
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Approaches to research

- **Assigned readings**
 - Relevant primary sources
 - Ancient Texts index on my website markbwilson.com/pages/texts.html
 - Articles assigned for class
 - Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores...*
- **Search for library books**
 - Lehman/CUNY OneSearch lehman.edu/library
 - Digital resources
 - Books on the shelf
 - NY Public Library browse.nyp.lg
 - Worldcat worldcat.org
- **Footnotes in the books you've already found**
- **Good ol' Prof. Wilson**

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Citations and bibliography



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Citing ancient sources

Footnote or parenthetical citation:

Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 3.2

Bibliography:

Thucydides and Steven Lattimore. *The Peloponnesian War*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998.

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Citing a play or poem

100 Four Texts on Socrates
101 CRATYLUS: What will you say if you're to deliver? For you've this point?
102 CRATYLUS: Yes, what? What else could I say?
103 CRATYLUS: From that point enter the public advocate?
104 CRATYLUS: From that point? The prosecutor?
105 CRATYLUS: From that point? From what point? From the indictment?
106 CRATYLUS: From that point? From what point? From the indictment?
107 CRATYLUS: From that point? From what point? From the indictment?
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119 CRATYLUS: From that point? From what point? From the indictment?
120 CRATYLUS: From that point? From what point? From the indictment?

Footnote or parenthetical citation:

Clouds, lines 1087–1104

Bibliography:

West, Thomas G., Grace Starry West,
Plato, and Aristophanes. *Four Texts
on Socrates: Plato's Euthyphro,
Apology, and Crito, and
Aristophanes' Clouds* (Rev. ed.).
Ithaca: Cornell University Press,
1998.



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Points to remember

- Cite all information from outside your head
 - Direct quotes
 - Paraphrases
 - Information, facts, statistics
 - Ideas
- Everything in the paper should support your thesis argument
- Do not just narrate the history
- Check the requirements for all papers

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