This project examines the lives of Greek priestesses in their prominent roles in the patriarchal society of ancient Greece. I argue that priestesses were distinguished from other contemporary women by their performance of roles in major public temples as rulers or ritual officiators, despite being dominated by authoritarian men.

A woman in ancient Greece was typically considered a silent *agalmata*, a prized possession of her male kin (Llewellyn-Jones 2003). Tragedy and myth even flirt with the appropriateness of the sacrifice of women to further the careers of their male relatives (Euripides). Women were expected to adhere to strict standards of decorum, which embodied Greek male preoccupation with visible *aidos*. Respect or shame of the woman reflected directly on the status of her man. The common woman was thought of as “Aphrodite’s tortoise” at home and in public, concealed behind her shell. Yet the dichotomy between the female and the male (Strauss Clay 2009) activated these priestesses to win a certain level of public status and respect for themselves. These women, including the Pythia, Theano, Iphigenia, and Charicleia, were given the opportunity to be set apart. It is these women, and the active role they played in male society as officials and masters of their temples, that my project investigates.

Selected Bibliography


Keywords: Ancient Greece, priestesses, patriarchy, women, family, patriotism
Bibliography


“Priestesses and Patriarchy – The Daily Lives of Ancient Greek Priestesses”
By Anna Paczuska, Directed by Dr. Benjamin McCloskey

List of Illustrations

Top Left Section:
1. Bottom Left:
Iphigenia among the Taurisan in detail from the painting of Iphigenia in Tauris, from the North wall of tablinum in Pompeii. Now in Naples Archeological Museum. Inventory number 111439.
May 2010.
2. Top Right:

Top Right Section:
1. Bottom Left
Lysistrata holding oinochoe and phiale while sacrificing to Athena in time of war with a hoplite warrior on Attic red-figure stamnos. Portrait of a Priestess, fig 6.11, page 178.
“We pay a double price for war.” (Lysistrata, 589-597)
2. Top Right:

Bottom Left Section:
1. Bottom Left
Pythia over the adyton on the tripod, next to the omphalos stone and laurel tree, with priests and petitioners on the painting of Camillo Miola. The Oracle, 1880.
2. Top Right:
“Greece in all its greatness now looks to me and no one else.” (Iphigenia in Aulis, 1378-1379)

Bottom Right Section:
1. Bottom Left
and in: Joan Breton-Connelly’s Portrait of a Priestess, fig 1.1, page 15.
2. Top Right:
Charicleia and Theagenes after shipwreck with the Egyptian buccaneers on Abraham Bloemaert’s painting *Charikleia and Theagenes*, 1625. 

The Middle Section of the poster shows the Homeric key, also known as the key of Penelope, the ancient attribute of Greek priestesses seen on their portrait statues and on other memorials, *mnemata*. Personal drawing based on the key depiction found in *Portrait of a Priestess*, page 85.