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*Project Title:* Priestesses and Patriarchy – The Daily Lives of Ancient Greek Priestesses

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

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**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.

<https://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R5/5%2001%2026%20p4.htm>.

2. Top Right:

Charicleia on the Workshop of Francois la Planche. *The Marriage of Theagenes and Charicleia*. Flanders/France, ca. 1620. Tapestry. W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, Harvard University. [www.diasporicroots.tumblr.com](http://www.diasporicroots.tumblr.com).

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:

Theano receiving the Greek embassy in Troy on the Corinthian Astarita black-figure *krater* about 560 B.C. Rome, Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco. Taken by Egisto Sani. [http://www.goddess-athena.org/Museum/Temples/Troy/Athena\\_at\\_Troy.html](http://www.goddess-athena.org/Museum/Temples/Troy/Athena_at_Troy.html).

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.

<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/630/camillo-miola-biaccia-the-oracle-italian-1880/>

2. Top Right:

Iphigenia in Aulis before the Greeks on Leonaert Bramert’s painting *The Sacrifice of Iphigenia*, 1623. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bramer,\\_Leonaert\\_-](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bramer,_Leonaert_-_The_Sacrifice_of_Iphigenia_-_c._1623.jpg)

[\\_The Sacrifice of Iphigenia - c. 1623.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bramer,_Leonaert_-_The_Sacrifice_of_Iphigenia_-_c._1623.jpg).

“Greece in all its greatness now looks to me and no one else.” (*Iphigenia in Aulis*, 1378-1379)

Bottom Right Section:

1. Bottom Left

Iphigenia among the Taurians as key bearer, *kleidouchos*, in Artemis’s temple, seen on the Apulian *skyphos*, the Sydney Painter. London, British Museum F

127. [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?assetId=881493001&objectId=463531&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=881493001&objectId=463531&partId=1)

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.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abraham\\_Bloemaert\\_-\\_Charikleia\\_and\\_Theagenes\\_-\\_WGA02275.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abraham_Bloemaert_-_Charikleia_and_Theagenes_-_WGA02275.jpg).

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.