

Society for Classical Studies 153rd Annual Meeting

January 5–8, 2022

San Francisco

Call for Papers for a Panel Sponsored by the Society for Late Antiquity

Panel Title: Gender, Power, and the Body in Late Antiquity

Organized by Melissa Harl Sellw, Classical & Near Eastern Studies, University of Minnesota

We invite paper proposals that address some aspect of the interconnections amongst gender, embodiment, and expressions of power in the late ancient world.

Recent work (Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 2006; Cawthorn, *Becoming Female*, 2008; Graybill, *Are We Not Men?* 2018; Marchal, *Appalling Bodies*, 2020) has advanced our understanding of how power of various sorts (whether that be in political, military, familial, civic, or religious contexts) is presented and effected through one's bodily presence. These negotiations and claims can often involve compelling gestures of gendered presentation and performance, which sometimes challenge — or more often underscore — prevailing social norms. The diverse cultures of late antiquity and Byzantium offer rich sites for exploring how bodily practices work to express claims for power and its active expression.

We hope to convene a panel of papers that draw on a broad range of literary, visual, or documentary material, encompassing historical, medical, philosophical, religious, or other relevant sources. Presentations may involve communities from any geographical or linguistic location of the Mediterranean and Near East. The time span for the panel is more or less from the third century CE into the middle Byzantine period (ca. 200 – 1100 CE).

Examples of research questions might include (but not be limited to): how contemporary disability studies inform ideologies of ascetic practice; how gender variance potentially modulates effects in oratory or juridical speech; how literary texts (prose or verse) project notions of power via images of gendered presence; how practitioners of ritual power (“magic”) compel divine forces through bodily action; how discourses of suffering, “virginity,” or sexuality operate in martyrological contexts; or how sculpture, mosaics, coinage, painting, or other visual sources convey messages of embodied potency. Proposals evincing a robust use of theoretical interpretive approaches would be especially welcome.

Please send abstracts of no longer than 500 words that follow the guidelines for individual abstracts (see the SCS [Guidelines for Authors of Abstracts](#)) as an email attachment to Melissa Harl Sellw, University of Minnesota, at sellw@umn.edu by February 1, 2021. Please ensure that the abstracts are anonymous. The organizer will have all submissions reviewed anonymously, and the decision will be communicated to the authors of abstracts by the end of March 2021, leaving enough time that those whose abstracts are not chosen can participate in the individual abstract submission process for the 2022 SCS meeting.