

Save Ancient Studies Alliance

Summer 2023 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group

Mother, Murderer: Medeas in Antiquity and Beyond

Medea is an enduring figure in ancient mythology and beyond. From the Colchian princess to wife of Jason to infanticidal mother to queen of Athens, Medea's magical and murderous qualities are her most famous attributes. But Medea's life after antiquity, especially in literature about marginalized women, suggest that we should take another look at Medea as we consider the question "why would a mother kill her children?" In this reading group, we will begin by reading Euripides' *Medea*, Apollonius' *Argonautica* Book 3, selections from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Seneca's *Medea*. In our final week, we will examine selections from Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* and Luis Alfaro's play *Mojada*. Was Medea's murder of her children a simple act of revenge, or is there more to this well-known story? Please note that this reading group will cover topics such as discrimination, violence against children, violence against women, sexual violence, and racial violence. I will provide weekly content warnings and encourage participants to participate as they are able.

Your SASA Educational Ambassadors:



Sophia Elzie (she/her)
Doctoral Student in Comparative Literary Studies
Northwestern University (beginning in fall 2023)
robbinselfie@gmail.com
Twitter: @srelzie

[Session Recordings Playlist - Youtube \(Private\)](#)

[Reading Group Folder Link](#)

n.b. Each week I will organize the readings into “Primary Readings” and “Supplemental Readings.” The primary readings will always be the main topic of discussion. For ancient texts, I will give links to translations but feel free to read any translation you like.

Week 1 Who is Medea? What is Classical Reception?

Primary Readings:

- Ovid *Metamorphoses* VII.1-424 [Kline Translation, Poetry in Translation](#)
- Ovid *Heroides* XII [Kline Translation, in Translation](#)
- “Medea” Rosanna Lauriola in c pp.377- **top of 381** (you’re skipping the pages in Apollonius), **383-385** (stop at Seneca!)

Content Warnings: violence

Supplemental Readings:

- “Assemblage theory and the uses of classical reception: the case of Aristotle Knowsley's Oedipus” Marcella Ward, *Classical Receptions Journal*. Oct 2019, Vol. 11 Issue 4, p. 508-523.

Slides (will be added after the end of the first session)

[Padlet](#)

Week 2 Apollonius’ Medea: Meeting Jason

Primary Readings:

- Apollonius *Argonautica* Books 3 and 4 **through line 670** Kelk Translation, [Poetry in Translation](#)

Content Warnings: violence

Supplemental Readings:

- Remainder of Book 4, books 1 and 2
- Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica* [Mozley Translation](#)

Week 3 Euripides’ Medea: Emergence of Mother, Murderer

Primary Readings: Euripides *Medea* [Luschnig Translation, Diotima](#)

Content Warnings: violence

Supplemental Readings: TBD

Week 4 Seneca's Medea: Now I am Medea

Primary Readings: Seneca *Medea*

Supplemental Readings: Finish "Medea" Rosanna Lauriola in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Medea*

Week 5 Medea in the United States

Primary Reading: Toni Morrison, [Beloved](#), Chapters 16-18 (pages 85-94 in the linked pdf) and Luis Alfaro, *Mojada* (entire play, pdf in drive folder!)

Please feel free to bring your own post-classical Medea for us to discuss!

Content Warnings: sexual assault, violence against women, racism

Supplemental Readings: "Hyperinclusivity, Hypercanonicity, and the Future of the Field"
Constanze Guthenke and Brooke Holmes