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Born in 1967 in Spoleto, Italy

Studied Classical Archaeology at the Università degli Studi di Pisa and the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa

PROJECT

The Disease of Women

The project deals with the representations of giving birth in Ancient Greece, in the literary, technical (medical) and iconographical traditions.

My interest focuses on the ambiguous status of giving birth. The event seems to be too strong and appealing not to be metaphorized and referred to men, which is what has happened since Homer. The metaphor of giving birth is referred to men in order either to communicate a strong pain (e. g. caused by a wound in battle) or to express the labour of philosophical knowledge, which produces "metaphorical children". What is left then to women, who are the ones literally involved in the event? The hypothesis is that the very possibility of metaphorizing giving birth could have in some way - to be researched - required to move the focus of the real, feminine prerogative of giving birth towards the sphere of disease. Literal childbirth as disease is attested both in the literary tradition (e. g. Plato) and in the iconographical one; here women are represented with the iconographical traits of absolute lack of control. This specific iconography was created around the end of the 5th century and the beginning of the 4th: representations of the subject are attested in music, theatre, painting and relief sculpture (function plays a major role here). The irrational, uncontrolled way women have to express pain (such as giving birth) seems to be paralleled by the way they are represented in love: some traits of the iconography of women in childbirth are used for women in love.

My final objective is to enter the very process of the specific ideological moves, of montage, for the creation of one of the most long-lasting prejudices in Western culture; i. e., the idea of women as weak, irrational and uncontrolled in relation to pain.

Recommended Reading

Catoni, Maria Luisa. "Le regole del vivere, le regole del morire. Su alcune stele per donne morte di parto." *Revue Archéologique* I (2005): 27-53.

___ . Schemata. Comunicazione non verbale nella Grecia antica. Turin: Boringhieri, 2008.

___ . "Il Bello fra etica e arte." In *La Forza del Bello: L'Arte Greca Conquista l'Italia* (Mantova, Palazzo Te). Catalogo a cura di Maria Luisa Catoni. Milan: Skira, 2008.

Some Thoughts on Women in 4th-century B. C. Athens

The social condition of women in ancient Greece has been intensively investigated, particularly ever since the 1970s. I will discuss documents and problems in three main areas:

- 1) The context where the problem was posed. I will briefly show how and when people began to focus on the social condition of women in antiquity.
- 2) Some contexts in which discourses on women were carried on between 410 and 350 B.C. I will try to outline the problem of the interaction between the prejudices against women and certain scholarly observations.
- 3) Some funerary monuments, produced between 375 B.C and 300 B.C., which employ an iconographic formula and choose to represent a subject totally new to the funerary genre - women dying in childbirth.

Catoni, Maria Luisa ([s.l.],172010)

"Trink mit mir, spiel mit mir, sei ausgelassen, wenn ich's bin": Bilder, Vasen. Lieder und das griechische Symposion

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=669202444>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (Milano,2013)

Tre figure : Achille, Meleagro, Cristo

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1604964111>

Campi del sapere

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1604964111>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (2013)

Donna disperata in movimento : Peripezie di un particolare

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=777916746>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (Milano,2010)

Bere vino puro : immagini del simposio

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=641062435>

Campi del sapere

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=641062435>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (Torino,2008)

La comunicazione non verbale nella Grecia antica : gli schemata nella danza, nell'arte, nella vita

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1618277634>

Universale Bollati Boringhieri ; 560

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1618277634>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (Milano,2008)

La forza del bello : l'arte greca conquista l'Italia ; [Mantova, Palazzo Te, 29 marzo - 6 luglio 2008]

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=669200689>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (Milano,2007)

Il patrimonio culturale in Francia

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1612924085>

Electa per le belle arti

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1612924085>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (2005)

Le regole del vivere, le regole del morire : su alcune stele attiche per donne morte di parto

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=757445799>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (1996)

Cercando le olimpiadi : nota iconografica

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670717762>

Catoni, Maria Luisa (Roma,1990)

Parigi 1904 : Picasso "Iberico" e le "Demoiselles d'Avignon"

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=75744525X>