

Staging the Heroine. The Construction and Performance of Female Heroism in Literature, the Visual Arts and Theatre (c. 1350-1800)

3-5 June 2026

Leiden, University Library (Witte Singel 27), Kartini Auditorium

Organizers: Karl Enenkel, Emma Grootveld,
Olga van Marion, Christoph Pieper, Jed Wentz

3rd June

8.45 Arrival

9.00 Welcome and Introduction

9.30 Session 1: “New Heroines” from Antiquity

Chair: Christoph Pieper

9.30-10.20 Karl Enenkel (Münster): Iole: The Early Modern Creation of a New Heroine and her Miraculous Metamorphoses in the Visual Arts

10.20-11.10 Ida Gilda Mastroianni (Firenze): “Ultra feminam ferox”: Triaria’s Heroism between Warrior Cruelty and Marital Loyalty

Coffee break

11.45 Session 2: Female Worthies

Chair: Stijn Bussels

11.45-12.35 M.A. Katritzky (Open University): Performing Female Worthies

12.35-13.25 Leonie Drees-Drylie (Münster): The Heroine’s Verdict: Reimagining Female Heroism and Virtue in the “Judgement of Paris” and other Myths of Decision-Making in Early Modern Art

Lunch break

14.30 Session 3: Christian Heroines

Chair: Hubert Mooiman

14.30-15.20 Robert Seidel (Frankfurt): Dorothea and Theophilus: Neo-Latin Christian Heroines by Eobanus Hessus, Bidermann, Bisselius, Cabillavius and Vincart

15.20-16.10 Miriam Holtkamp (Münster): "A Manly Soul in a Woman's Body?" Matilda of Canossa and the *virilis anima* in Early Modern Heroic Representation

20.00 The Dutch Historical Acting Collective: *Cleopatra* (Waalse Kerk, Breestraat 62-64)

A concertante revival of *Cleopatra* (Mannheim, 1780), a melodrama with incidental music by Franz Danzi. The final hours of Cleopatra's life are presented in pathos-laden *Sturm-und-Drang* monologues, as she confronts the collapse of her kingdom. The performance is based on historical acting and declamation sources, interrogating our ideas of how a heroine might have been staged in the late 18th century.

Voice actors: Laila Cathleen Neuman, João Luís Paixão, Jedidiah Wentz, Annelies Andries

Fortepiano: Anders Muskens

Moderator: Jed Wentz

4th June

9.00 Session 4: Heroines in the Dutch Theatre

Chair: Olga van Marion

9.00-9.50 Henriëtte Rietveld (Amsterdam): The Unmarking of Whiteness: Rosaura and Inner Virtue in *De beklagelycke dwang*.

9.50-10.40 Frans Blom (Amsterdam): Radical Heroines. *Medea* in Amsterdam's Roaring Sixties of the 17th century

Coffee break

11.15 Session 5: Courtly Heroines

Chair: Johannes Müller

11.15-12.05 Alejandro Coroleu (Barcelona): Female Heroism in Latin Texts from the War of the Spanish Succession

12:05-12:55 Elke Katharina Wittich (Hannover): Prussian Heroines: Reception of Ancient Females at the Brandenburg-Prussian Court under Sophie Charlotte and her Master of Ceremonies Johann von Besser

Lunch break

14.00 Session 6: Heroines in Musical Performance

Chair: Jed Wentz

14.00-14.50 Arianna Radaelli (Stuttgart): Subverting Gender: Alessandro Scarlatti's *Judith*

14.50-15.40 Anders Muskens (Tübingen): Virtue in Distress: Cleopatra as a Sentimental Heroine in Melodrama of the Mannheim School

Coffee break

16.15 Session 7: 18th-century Heroines

Chair: Amaranth Feuth

16.15-17.05 Olga van Marion en Marit Scheepsma (Leiden): Staging Mary of Burgundy as a Medieval Heroine: The Conquest of the Eighteenth-Century Dutch Theatre Audience by Women

17.05-17.55 Alice Tartari (Venezia), Quixotic Heroines in Eighteenth-Century England: The Quest for a Model

19:00 Conference dinner (Pakhuis, Doelensteeg 8)

5th June

9.00 Session 8: Dido

Chair: Karl Enenkel

9.00-9.50 Christoph Pieper (Leiden): Dido on Stage: Dramatizing the Queen of Carthage between Virgil and the 17th century

9.50-10.40 Nina Niedermeier (Augsburg): The Motif of Fainting in Female Heroism. The Swooning Queens Esther and Dido in Early Modern Visual Arts and Their Connections with Theatrical Productions

Coffee break

11.15 Session 9: Eastern Heroines

Chair: Emma Grootveld

11.15-12.05 Elisa Stafferini (Warburg Institute): “You Thirsted for Blood, Now Drink it”: Revenge and Christian Symbolism in the Afterlife of Queen Tomyris

12.05-12.55 Gabriele Bucchi (Basel): “Altero e raro mostro”: Semiramis, a Controversial Heroine between Literature and Art

Lunch break

14.00 Session 10: Heroines across genres and media

Chair: tba

14.00-14.50 Sandra Clerc (Fribourg): Staging Female Heroism between Tragedy and Comedy: Rhetoric, Agency, and Exemplarity in Luigi Groto’s Theatre

14.50-15.40 Marlies Ehrenpaar (Wien): Dressed to Save France

15.45-16.15 Concluding remarks, information about the publication and farewell