

Gender and Peace – Dialogues between Antiquity and the Present

The study of antiquity has long been dominated by narratives of warfare, violence, political conflict and military power, told largely from the perspective of elite, male, war-oriented sources. By contrast, the ways in which ancient communities imagined, experienced, negotiated, maintained and rebuilt peace have received considerably less attention. Bringing gender into the study of peace offers an opportunity not only to recover overlooked actors and experiences, but also to question established assumptions about what peace was, who was able to build it, and whose experiences have been represented in historical narratives.

This international workshop explores the intersections between gender and peace across time, placing ancient experiences and conceptualisations of peace in conversation with later historical periods and with contemporary Peace and Conflict Studies. It asks how gender can function as a transversal analytical lens through which Ancient Peace Studies and contemporary Peace Studies might interrogate, and potentially transform, one another.

We invite proposals for papers of 15 to 20 minutes engaging critically with the categories of peace, gender, violence, conflict, reconciliation, care, recovery, integration and peacebuilding. Contributions may examine any period, region or culture of antiquity, as well as its reception in later periods, in dialogue with present-day conceptualisations of peace and gender.

The workshop will be structured around four panels:

1. Unearthing Peace and Gender: Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks

This panel will explore theoretical and methodological approaches for bringing ancient evidence into dialogue with contemporary Peace and Gender Studies. Questions might include: What are the possibilities and limitations of applying modern concepts of gender and peace to ancient societies? How can contemporary Peace Studies and gender theory help us re-read textual, epigraphic and material evidence?

2. Gendered Practices of Peace, Mediation and Recovery

This panel will focus on the processes through which communities sought to prevent, manage or recover from conflict and rebuild peaceful relationships, and it will ask how these processes intersected with gender and with gendered peace imaginaries. Papers might explore gendered forms of mediation and conflict resolution, integration, reconciliation and reconstruction, as well as care, migration, displacement, captivity, return, family and community networks, and non-state forms of peacebuilding. The panel will also examine how gendered assumptions helped shape what peace itself meant, who was authorised to make it, whose labour sustained it, and whose experiences were remembered as peaceful.

3. Remembering and Reimagining Antiquity: Gender and Peace across Time

This panel will examine the reception of ancient ideas, myths, historical figures and representations concerning gender and peace from the Middle Ages to the present. Papers could address Classical Reception, historiography and historical memory, literature and the

arts, visual culture, political and ideological appropriations of antiquity, and changing representations of women, masculinity and peace. The goal is to explore how ancient peace imaginaries have been transformed and mobilised in later political and social contexts, without assuming a straightforward line of continuity between ancient and modern understandings of peace.

4. Reimagining Ancient Peace: Heritage, Public History and New Narratives

The final panel will turn towards the present and ask how histories of ancient peace can be represented, communicated and reimagined today, particularly through museums, archaeological heritage, public history, education, storytelling, visual culture, digital humanities and other forms of public engagement. This connects with the APSN's interest in peace literacy and outreach, while allowing us to explore how more inclusive and gender-sensitive narratives of antiquity might challenge traditional androcentric and militarised representations of the ancient past.

The workshop will conclude with an interdisciplinary roundtable, entitled "The Future of the Past: Opportunities and Challenges at the Intersection of Antiquity, Gender and Peace." A key question will be: What can Ancient Peace Studies learn from Gender and Peace Studies, and vice versa? Other questions might include how ancient perspectives can expand contemporary definitions of peace and peacemaking; what patterns of gender, power, violence and care persist or change across historical contexts; and how rethinking representations of ancient peace might contribute to contemporary peace literacy.

Some public engagement activities will accompany the workshop, including a peace storytelling workshop for children and some museum engagement.

For more information, or to express interest in participating, please email vispeace@st-andrews.ac.uk. Please send expressions of interest/paper abstracts by 30th November 2026.