

Bosom Buddies: Female Friendship in Senecan Tragedy

Cicero's *De Amicitia*, the largest Roman treatise on friendship, predominantly associates females with the concept of friendship in the contexts of parenthood and male rivalries influenced by women (Fogel, 2009). Meanwhile, David Konstan's major study of friendship in antiquity dedicates only a few pages to the role of women in the sections "Sappho and Women" (1997, pp. 47-8), "Women as Friends" (1997, pp. 90-91), and "Friendship Between Men and Women" (1997, p.146). So, while our extant sources inadequately represent female friendships, contemporary perspectives are also limited by male-centric delineations.

Jessica Sisk's study in 2013 marks the first exploration of ancient female friendships but did not account for Roman tragedy. My analysis of Seneca's Euripidean tragedies – *Medea*, *Phaedra*, and *Troades* – provides insights into displays of friendship in the dialogues among female characters. While aspects of these dramas align with Konstan's analysis, noticeable patterns also emerge that deviate from his definition. These patterns are substantial enough to warrant a reevaluation of the concept of friendship in antiquity and how it may differ for women due to the societal roles and expectations placed on them.

The poster will contain the primary literary analysis in the central panel. The left panel will feature an introduction with definitions of friendship in antiquity and earlier research on female friendships. Below, there will be a collection of poignant quotes from the texts. The right panel will house the references and conclusion, ultimately proposing a more inclusive friendship definition.

Bibliography

Fogel, J. (2009). Can Girls Be Friends?: Talking about Gender in Cicero's *de Amicitia*. *Classical World*, 103(1), 77–87. <https://doi.org/10.1353/clw.0.0150>

Konstan, D. (1997). *Friendship in the classical world*. Cambridge University Press.

Sisk, J. M. (2013). Female friendships in Greco-Roman antiquity (Order No. 3564158).

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