

## **‘Back To a Time Before I Had Form’: Ancient Origin Myth(s) of Queerness**

Classics as a discipline has historically positioned itself as a search for origins, drawing tenuous and often fictional connections between ancient cultures and modern ‘Western civilisation’. Origin stories of gender and sexuality have also contributed to this narrative: the classical past has played an integral part in forming categories and images of sexual difference and desire. Scholars and activists have then often turned to Graeco-Roman antiquity in order to advocate for the legal rights and social legitimization for LGBTQ+ identities. While ancient evidence of queer desire has been an important tool for combatting queerphobia, this attempt at legitimizing contemporary queerness through ‘the classical’ has also reinforced dangerous and exclusionary ideologies, facilitating strategies of pinkwashing, homonationalism, and the erasure of intersectional identities. What does it mean to look for the origin of queerness in the ancient world? Which forms of gender expressions, sexuality, and desire become excluded in doing so? What are the dangers of supporting such origin myths? By probing at these and more questions, this seminar series will investigate the supposed utility of a straightforward search for origins, teasing out new connections from hostile sources through the following line-up of amazing speakers.

Classical Reception Studies Network  
Institute of Classical Studies, London  
Queer and the Classical (QATC)  
Virtual Seminar Series

## **‘Back To a Time Before I Had Form’: Ancient Origin Myth(s) of Queerness**

16th May

Vanessa Stovall – *A Womb with a (Re)view: the Birth of Masculine Heterosexual Diversion in Greco-Roman Myth*

30th May

Emilio Capettini (UCSB) – “*Our Ancient Greek Dykes, Fags*”: *Queer Genealogies during the HIV/AIDS Crisis*

6th June

Sara Torres (Universität Passau) – *Glukupikron: The Meanings of Eros in Sapphic Poetic Subcultures*

13th June

Isabel Ruffell (University of Glasgow) – *Why is Medea Shocking? Myths of Safe Spaces and the Anti-Trans Backlash*

20th June

Cat Lambert (Cornell University) – *Forging Lesbians: Sappho, Bilitis, and the Politics of Authenticity*

27th June

London Classicists of Colour (UCL) – Collective intervention

4th July

Jennifer Ingleheart (Durham University) – *Unoriginal Sins: Some Problems with Finding Queer Origins in Classical Antiquity*