



Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature

Gail Holst-Warhaft

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In *Dangerous Voices* Holst-Warhaft investigates the power and meaning of the ancient lament, especially women's mourning of the dead, and sets out to discover why legislation was introduced to curb these laments in antiquity. An investigation of laments ranging from New Guinea to Greece suggests that this essentially female art form gave women considerable power over the rituals of death. The threat they posed to the Greek state caused them to be appropriated by male writers including the tragedians. Holst-Warhaft argues that the loss of the traditional lament in Greece and other countries not only deprives women of their traditional control over the rituals of death but leaves all mourners impoverished.

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