

EDITORIAL

HERSTORY IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

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After the pandemic break (2020–2021) the journal *TheMA* continues with the presentation of research results relating to the cultures, literature, theater, music, and arts of and on southeast Europe. Furthermore, the next three volumes will be dedicated to herstory in the mesoregion, with the focus on women's studies. Starting with this volume, female cultural entrepreneurs, Maecenases, authors, artists, composers, and performing artists, as well as the characters in literary, dramatic, and musical works, will be presented in papers by international scholars.

Herstory is embedded in the interdisciplinary and theoretical context of Gender and Women's Studies. "Women's Studies is the most revolutionary new field of intellectual inquiry of our current age. In the simplest form, Women's Studies brings all of women's experience under the scholarly microscope. [...] Women's Studies programs include almost every perspective – from the natural sciences to the social sciences, from law to the arts. This breadth makes Women's Studies the most wide-ranging of academic fields. Its rich diversity provides the judgments, research, and energy of a broad group of scholars and students to advance the discipline."¹

Poststructuralism brought new perspectives and interpretations of identity and the discovery of subordinated feminine voices as a critique of conventional patriarchal historiography. The concept of gender identity has been discussed extensively and defined as a cultural construct (de Beauvoir), or as a result of a process of socialization (Foucault), which alternatively emerges with the ego (Freud) and is related to performativity (Butler). Furthermore, according to Judith Butler, gender is "a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction 'compels' our belief in its necessity and naturalness. The historical possibilities materialized through various corporeal styles are nothing other than those punitively regulated cultural fictions alternately

1 Bonnie G. Smith, *Women's Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

embodied and deflected under duress.”² It is “constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts.”³

Unlike literary studies, where the discipline of Gender and Women’s Studies was first developed, awareness of gender issues is relatively new in musicology, entering the field with the turn towards a new or cultural musicology in the 1980s, transforming the previously positivist discipline.⁴ Herstory thus challenges the lack of gender balance in the canon and sheds light on the creative contributions of marginalized women. Taking as a point of departure Deleuze’s observation that women are always a minority regardless of their number, as a subsystem within a patriarchal system,⁵ Anette Kreuziger-Herr concludes that herstory enriches history through sharpening the view of women in their historical context, so that the inclusion of women can lead to a different reading of history.⁶

On this occasion, herstory will be introduced as a part of Balkan Studies with an exploration of female perspectives in literature, theatre, and music history in southeast Europe from the eighteenth to the end of the twentieth century. The focus is on the voices and images of women who should be integrated into European cultural history: the Sephardic Jewish playwright Laura Papo (Nela Kovačević), the Maecenas Josepha Palm (Emese Sófalvi), and the composer and musician Leyla Saz (Nejla Melike Altalaz), as well as visual representations of Croatian women in the 1990s as an alternative to male warriors (Klaudija Sabo).

These four articles present herstory in the wide space from the Ottoman Empire to the post-Ottoman age of the Republic of Turkey, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Transylvania, and Croatia. They are written by four female scholars who thus make an important contribution to the herstory of southeastern Europe.

2 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 179.

3 Ibid., 178.

4 “Gender also has much to offer historiography, that sprawling category that encompasses many others. [...] gender helps to reshuffle the categories, and this itself is beneficial to the field. Of the diverse topics in historiography, one of the most important is canon formation. [...] Here gender is critical: it provides an analytical category that can expose many of the assumptions and ideologies behind seemingly value-free conditions that have promoted the Western canon (or canons). For example, gendered ideologies behind creativity and professionalism tell us a great deal about why and how women composers have been excluded from mainstream practices in art music. They also reveal many of the conventions that led to the inclusion of certain works and composers. Thus, gender is not confined to marginal groups but has the ability to probe the central tradition and how it became that way.” See Marcia J. Citron, “Gender and the Field of Musicology,” in *Current Musicology* 53 (1993): 66–75, here 69–70. Marcia J. Citron and Susan McClary are regarded as pioneers of feminist musicology.

5 Gilles Deleuze, “Philosophie et minorité,” in *Critique* 34/369 (February 1978): 154–155.

6 Annette Kreuziger-Herr, “History und Herstory: Musikgeschichte, Repräsentation und tote Winkel,” in *History / Herstory: Alternative Musikgeschichten* (Cologne et al.: Böhlau, 2009), 21–46, here 35.