Universität Zürich[UZH]

Institut für Archäologie,
Klassische Philologie und
Altertumswissenschaften

Fachbereich Lateinische Philologie

Einladung zu einem Vortrag von

Dr. Krešimir Vuković

Charles University in Prague

Rivers, Gender, and Fluidity

Ancient river deities display a remarkable variety of identities. Historians often state that Roman rivers are regularly male and represented as bearded, muscular men. Yet this narrow stereotype does not fit the mythology of the Tiber, still less the variety of conceptions of rivers across the ancient Mediterranean. In Sicily, several streams are personified as female nymphs. Egyptian Hapi, the god of the Nile flood, combines male and female characteristics, while Mesopotamian river deities display an even greater variety of gender identities. Greek river gods are predominantly male, but Heracles' struggle with Achelous in Sophocles' Trachiniae takes a curious turn when the great hero compares himself to a woman at the end of the play. Fluvial identities are also fluid in other ways, as in ancient Italian traditions in which heroes merge with rivers. Using Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian evidence, this paper argues that ancient river deities resist fixed categories. Their shifting forms and identities are best understood through the concept of fluidity.

Mittwoch, 28. Oktober 2026

18:15 – 19.45 Uhr

RAG 104 (Rämistrasse 68, Zürich)

Dozierende, Studierende und weitere Interessierte sind herzlich eingeladen!

Prof. Dr. Anke Walter