



EmpowHer  
PERMACULTURE



# EmpowHER PERMACULTURE

Women's Practices in Rural Areas  
Mapping of Feminine Empowerment

AGENZIA NAZIONALE  
**ERASMUS+** **INDIRE**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



GIOVANI  
IDDOCCA  
ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE



DRUŠTVO ZA  
PERMAKULTURO  
SLOVENIJE

Zelena  
Doba  
Centar za održivi rast i razvoj



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## PARTNER OF THE PROJECT

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## PARTNER OF THE PROJECT

### ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE GIOVANI IDDOCCA ETS - ITALY

Giovani Iddocca is a cultural association founded in 2018 in rural Sardinia. It promotes the active participation of young people and adults in local communities through projects focused on permaculture, creativity, civic engagement and sustainable development. While rooted in international Erasmus+ cooperation, the association has recently shifted focus towards stronger local impact. Projects like Ammonte explored how to reclaim abandoned public spaces through participatory processes. Giovani Iddocca also created Treballu Hub, the first rural coliving space in Sardinia, where it organises community-based events, residencies and educational workshops.

### COB – KINONIKI SINETERISTIKI EPIHIRISI - GREECE

COB is a social cooperative and ecological community based in a small village in Thessaly, Greece. With over 20 years of experience in sustainability and self-sufficiency, COB is known for its work in natural building, renewable energy, and regenerative farming. It runs an educational farm where it hosts hands-on workshops, local engagement activities, and international projects. Their work empowers both individuals and communities, especially those from vulnerable or rural backgrounds.

### DRUŠTVO ZA PERMAKULTURO SLOVENIJE | DPS - SLOVENIA

Founded in 1996, DPS is Slovenia's national Permaculture Association. It brings together permaculture teachers, designers and activists to promote ecological living and regenerative education. The association offers Permaculture Design Courses (PDCs), collaborates with schools to create learning gardens and outdoor spaces, and provides consultancy for sustainable farming systems. DPS also focuses on inclusive and accessible education, such as the "Permakultura 101" online programme, making permaculture available to diverse groups.

### ZELENO DOBA – CENTAR ZA ODRŽIVI RAST I RAZVOJ - SERBIA

Zelena Doba is a Serbian NGO committed to sustainable and inclusive living through non-formal education, facilitation, and permaculture-based approaches. It supports women, youth and educators by combining practical tools like natural building and regenerative practices with innovative methodologies such as Dragon Dreaming, sociocracy and design thinking. Through local and international partnerships, Zelena Doba strengthens communities and provides resources for long-term resilience and empowerment.

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

## WHERE THE PROJECT COMES FROM

EmpowHer Permaculture was born from the encounter between four organizations active in rural contexts in Italy, Greece, Slovenia, and Serbia, committed to promoting environmental sustainability and women's empowerment.

The project stems from the awareness that the climate crisis and gender-based violence share the same roots: a patriarchal, exploitative, and unsustainable cultural model.

In rural areas, these issues are even more evident: social isolation, lack of services, female unemployment, cultural stereotypes, and a gradual loss of traditional knowledge.

At the same time, however, rural territories hold a transformative potential: simpler lifestyles, resilient communities, and a strong connection to the land. In this context, EmpowHer Permaculture offers a new perspective: placing women at the center of environmental and social regeneration, recognizing their qualities and strengthening their autonomy.

## OBJECTIVES

The project aims to promote self-determination and female leadership in rural communities through tools inspired by permaculture. Its main objectives are:

- To raise women's awareness of their value and potential for action;
- To promote the use of permaculture as a tool for emancipation, regeneration, and climate justice;
- To offer practical educational tools to educators, social workers, and activists, through a Permaculture Design Course (PDC) and a deck of illustrated cards;
- To collect and enhance traditional and contemporary women-led practices that connect care for the land with care for people.

## THE RESEARCH ABOUT WOMAN PRACTICES

In the first phase of the project, each partner conducted research to define 12 qualities that belong to the feminine - we would like to emphasise that when we talk about femininity, we are referring to the duality present in every human being, regardless of gender. Then, traditional practices carried out by women – rooted in rural contexts in the partner countries and beyond – were identified and collected.

The practices mapped and presented in this booklet tell stories of resistance, adaptability, regeneration, and vision. Each practice has been analyzed through the lens of the feminine qualities identified by the project (such as care and nurturing, resilience, cyclicity, intuition), and connected to the principles of permaculture, creating both a symbolic and practical bridge between women's knowledge and ecological design.

Thirteen of the collected practices have been illustrated and transformed into cards that will guide women's empowerment during the Permaculture Design Course (PDC) developed through this project.

# WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS BOOKLET

This booklet presents a curated selection of women's practices rooted in rural contexts, organized into thematic macro-categories that reflect the many ways women relate to community, nature, and care. Each practice tells the story of a gesture, a knowledge, or an intuition shaped by everyday life, offering inspiration for new paths of self-determination and transformation.

Each practice includes:

- Its geographical origin, to contextualize and honor the cultural roots of the knowledge shared;
- A concise description, capturing the core of the practice and its function within the community;
- The feminine qualities it was associated with, selected among the twelve identified in the project (Holistic Thinking, Cyclical, Resistance, Adaptability, Regeneration, Resilience, Vision for the Future, Empathy, Care and Nurturing, Horizontal Leadership, Intuition, Creativity);
- The power it holds, a reflection on the transformative potential of the practice for women and their communities;
- Relevant resources, offering links or tools for further exploration or replication.
- Three keypoints to summarise them.

The authors are fully aware that many more practices exist beyond those featured in this collection. The aim here is not to be exhaustive, but to offer tangible evidence that, throughout history and across geographies, women have played central, often vital, roles in the well-being of their communities.

Even within patriarchal systems that have long rendered their contributions invisible, women have been quiet protagonists, guardians of knowledge, care, and connection.

This booklet is not just an act of recognition: it is also a call.

A call to gather these stories and, above all, to support every woman in reclaiming the power that resides within her—a power that, once made conscious, can become care, creativity, and meaningful action.

📍 ITALY - SARDINIA

# Sa Reina

## THE QUEEN

“Sa Reina” was the woman in charge of managing the household and coordinating the seasonal transhumance in Sardinian pastoral communities. While men often accompanied the animals across regions, sa reina stayed behind to organize resources, raise children, maintain social ties, and make key decisions regarding land use, food preservation, and exchanges with the community.

In some cases, she also travelled during the transhumance, taking care of both the family and the animals. Her figure combines strength, autonomy, and deep connection with the rhythms of nature and the needs of her community.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

Her presence affirms death as part of the natural cycle of life.

### Resistance

She upheld her role with constancy through hardship, isolation, and environmental challenges. Sa Reina represents a form of rural female leadership rooted in care, land knowledge, and social cohesion. Recognizing her historical role supports the empowerment of contemporary rural women by reclaiming a legacy of strength, responsibility, and ecological wisdom that is often excluded from mainstream narratives.

### Horizontal leadership

She exercised informal but essential leadership, coordinating resources, time, and relationships without hierarchical power

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of women's leadership in rural and agro-pastoral systems.
- Inspiration for local governance and self-organization grounded in care.
- Empowerment through connection with ancestral roles and land-based knowledge.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Sa Reina embodies female leadership through care, resilience, and intuition.
- She maintained balance between family, land, and seasonal rhythms.
- Her legacy can inspire contemporary women to reclaim responsibility in rural transformation.

## RESOURCE

[Portrait of a Sardinian woman](#)

📍 GREECE, ITALY, BROADER MEDITERRANEAN

# Women Olive Harvesters and Oil Makers

Women have long been central to olive harvesting and oil production, from ancient Greece to the present Mediterranean. Rooted in the myth of Athena's sacred olive, symbol of wisdom, peace, and prosperity, women's work required precise timing, strength, and deep knowledge of trees, soil, and seasons.

Historical records show women pruning, gathering olives by hand, operating early presses, and preparing oils for food, healing, and ritual use.

In many villages they organized communal harvests, transmitted techniques across generations, and safeguarded family groves.

Even today, women continue to sustain olive culture through cultivation, production, and stewardship of ancestral lands, preserving a millennia-old tradition at the heart of Mediterranean identity.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

Her presence affirms death as part of the natural cycle of life.

### Resilience

Endured physical demands and seasonal cycles with dedication.

### Horizontal leadership

She exercised informal but essential leadership, coordinating resources, time, and relationships without hierarchical power

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Provided direct access to food and income.
- Strengthened collective labor traditions among women.
- Embedded women in ecological knowledge system.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Honored women as ecological and agricultural stewards.
- Reinforced female-led economies in rural contexts.
- Sustained biodiversity through generational land intimacy

## RESOURCE

- [Women and olive oil production: From ancient times to the modern era](#)

📍 GREECE (AEGEAN ISLANDS, SPECIFICALLY KARAPATHOS)

# Matriarchal Role in Aegean Island Societies

In certain Aegean island societies, such as Karpathos, especially in the village of Olympos, women hold central positions of authority within the family and community. The matriarch, usually the eldest woman, manages household affairs, oversees finances, inherits property, and often makes the crucial family decisions. This system creates female-led communities where women's experience and judgment guide social and economic life.

In Olympos, daughters traditionally inherit the

family home and land, while sons leave to seek work elsewhere, reinforcing a social structure in which women remain the anchors of lineage, continuity, and cultural identity. Women also preserve local customs, dress, music, and ritual life, acting as guardians of collective memory.

Though modern pressures threaten this rare matriarchal system, its legacy endures: a community shaped by women's leadership, resilience, and authority, one of the last living testimonies of matriarchal tradition in Europe.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

Women in these societies demonstrate resilience by maintaining and upholding traditions, managing the household, and overseeing social affairs, especially in rural and isolated island communities.

### Holistic Thinking

The matriarch often integrates various aspects of community life, from managing economic resources to preserving cultural practices, promoting a balanced and sustainable community.

### Care and Nurturing

The matriarch's role centers around care and nurturing, ensuring the well-being of family members and the transmission of cultural traditions.

### Vision for the future

The matriarch's decisions are grounded in foresight and long-term thinking, ensuring that future generations continue to thrive within their cultural context.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Empowerment through leadership and the management of family, resources, and community affairs.
- Preservation of cultural heritage and traditions, passed down through generations of women.
- Access to significant decision-making power and the ability to influence social and economic life within the community.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Empowerment through leadership and the management of family, resources, and community affairs.
- Preservation of cultural heritage and traditions, passed down through generations of women.
- Access to significant decision-making power and the ability to influence social and economic life within the community.

## RESOURCE

[In a Greek Village, One of Europe's Last Matriarchal Societies Is Near Death](#)

📍 ITALY - SARDINIA

# Levadoras

## TRADITIONAL MIDWIVES OF SARDINIA

Is levadoras were traditional Sardinian midwives who assisted women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. Active especially in rural and often isolated villages, they played a central role not only in the physical act of birth but also in the emotional and spiritual care of women and newborns.

Their knowledge was transmitted orally through generations and deeply rooted in ancestral wisdom, rituals, and a close relationship with nature

In addition to childbirth, they often offered support in healing, protection, and transitions across the female life cycle.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

Often working in difficult conditions, they remained present and resourceful, embodying trust and strength.

### Empathy

They provided emotional and physical support based on deep understanding and compassion

### Intuition

Without formal training, their knowledge and interventions were guided by inner awareness, embodied experience, and ancestral memory.

### Care and Nurturing

Their primary role was to care for women and babies during one of the most vulnerable and powerful phases of life.

### Creativity

They used natural remedies, hands-on techniques and adaptive solutions tailored to each woman's needs.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of traditional knowledge as a form of empowerment.
- Restoration of women's confidence in their bodies and experiences.
- Strengthening intergenerational bonds through shared practices of care and support.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Is levadoras embody care, trust, and feminine wisdom.
- Their practice integrates physical, emotional, and intuitive knowledge.
- They represent a resilient and creative model of rural female leadership.

## RESOURCE

[Teacher and expert in the mysteries of childbirth](#)

📍 GREECE AND ANCIENT ROME

# Midwives

## KEEPERS OF LIFE AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

Midwives were central to childbirth and reproductive care in Ancient Greece and Rome. They guided women through pregnancy, labor, and postpartum healing using herbal remedies, massage, and deep experiential knowledge. Their expertise extended beyond delivery: they educated women on fertility, contraception, and infant care, offered emotional support, and safeguarded women's health in a world without formal medical systems.

Historical sources describe midwives as highly

skilled practitioners capable of diagnosing pregnancy, managing complications, and performing both natural and assisted births. Some specialized in prenatal care, while others acted as community healers and custodians of reproductive wisdom. Their work formed the foundation of women's healthcare, blending practical skill with intuition, empathy, and ritual knowledge, a legacy that shaped early medical practice throughout the Mediterranean.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

Operated in high-stress, life-or-death situations.

### Adaptability

Navigated diverse birth scenarios with limited tools.

### Care and Nurturing

Central to their function, they supported women physically and emotionally

### Creativity

Developed home remedies and birthing techniques. These qualities enabled them to sustain life and uphold maternal care under challenging circumstances

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Established female-led networks of healthcare and wisdom.
- Promoted autonomy in women's health matters.
- Created an institutional memory of female medical expertise.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Elevated women's social roles through healthcare.
- Enabled reproductive autonomy and education.
- Preserved and evolved medical knowledge across generations.

## RESOURCE

[The image and role of the midwife in the ancient Greek and Byzantine art](#)

📍 SLAVIC REGIONS – WITH TRACES IN SERBIAN, SLOVENE, POLISH, AND CZECH SPRING TRADITIONS.

# Vesna

## THE AWAKENER OF SPRING AND NEW LIFE

Vesna, in Slavic mythology and regional folklore, is regarded as a personification of spring, renewal, and the return of light. Her name appears mostly among West and North Slavs, where she symbolizes youth, awakening, and the cyclical rebirth of nature after winter. In these traditions she is described as a bright, youthful figure connected with the first warm winds, budding branches, and the early signs of life returning to the land.

Although the name Vesna is not preserved in Serbian folk customs, her archetype survives in women-led spring rituals such as Lazarice and Đurđevdan, where greenery, song, and processions mark the arrival of new life. Across Slavic cultures, Vesna is often interpreted in relation to Morana, reflecting the rhythm through which winter's decline makes space for spring's renewal.



Credits: Christian\_Bernhard\_Rode

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

Vesna expresses the cycle in which endings make space for beginnings. She reminds women that each season, within life and within the self, has purpose, timing, and wisdom.

### Intuition

Vesna is sensed before she is seen: in light, air, and soil. She honours women's intuitive awareness, the deep knowing that arises before action and keeps life aligned with natural and emotional cycles.

### Creativity

She inspires creation through art, song, and ritual. For women, this quality turns imagination into shared beauty and everyday community life. Creativity becomes both a source of renewal and a practice of joy.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Emotional renewal and healing after times of rest or hardship.
- Reconnection with natural and bodily cycles, restoring inner balance.
- Awakening of creative and life-affirming energy through collective rituals.
- Empowerment through community practices that nurture regeneration and care.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Vesna embodies feminine renewal and the joy of new beginnings.
- She guides women to live in rhythm with nature and intuition.
- Her energy turns care and creativity into empowerment.

## RESOURCE

- [Vesna \(mythology\)](#)
- [Vesna, the Goddess of Youth and Spring](#)
- [A Cycle of Life and Death: Slavic Goddesses Morana and Vesna](#)

UNIVERSAL

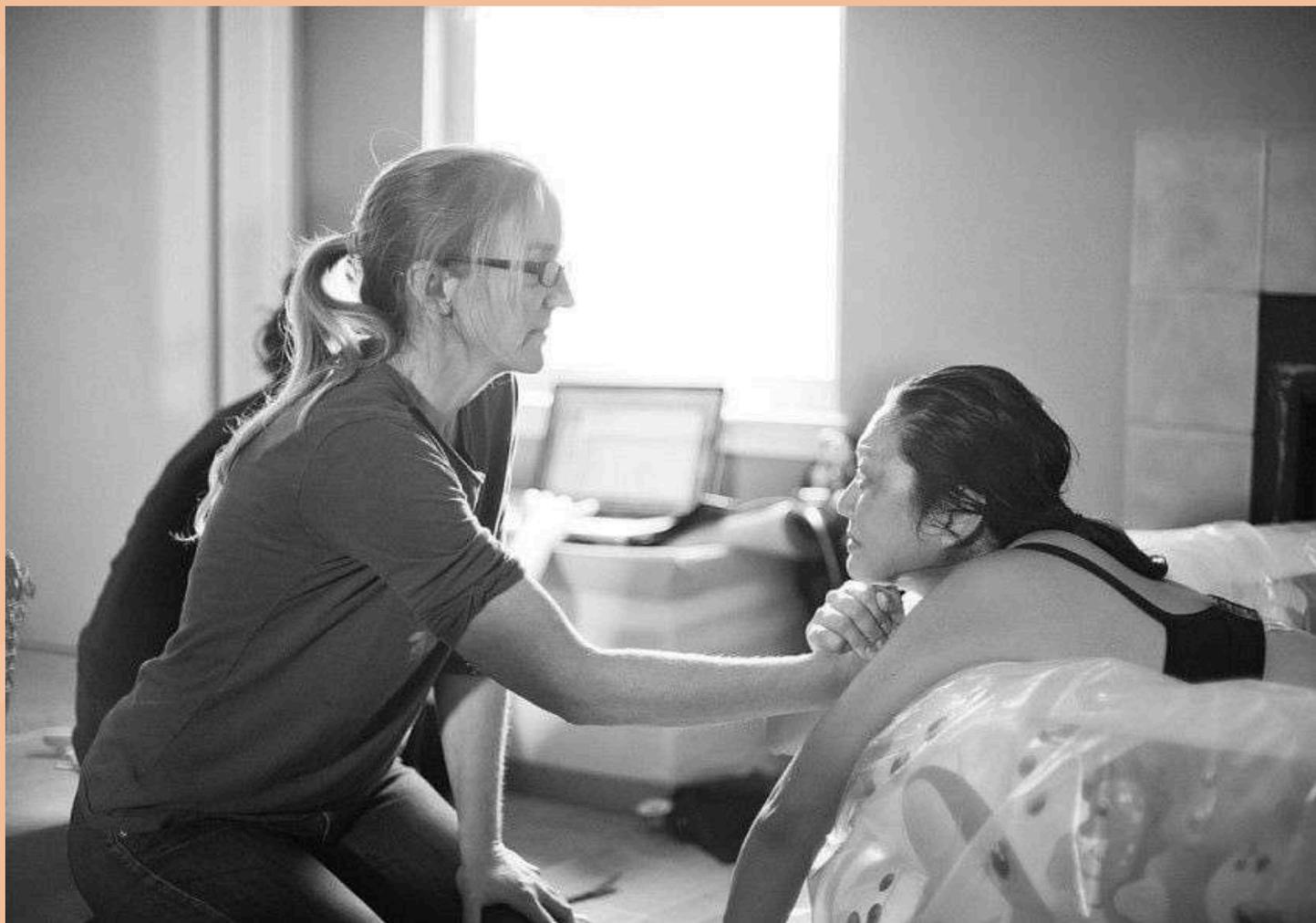
# Doula

## WOMEN WHO HOLD BIRTH, BREATH, AND TRANSITION

A doula offers emotional, physical, and informational support through the profound transitions of life: birth, postpartum, miscarriage, and even death.

Doulas are restoring trust and softness to childbirth, guiding women through breathing, movement, and presence. Their work is not about control but companionship: walking beside, listening deeply, and holding sacred space.

This ancient feminine role reawakens care, patience, and collective wisdom in modern systems that often forget the human heart of birth, reminding us that women need presence, gentleness, and continuity just as much as they need medical safety. A doula brings back the slow, attentive support that once belonged to mothers, midwives, and neighbors, restoring the relational fabric around birth that many women today have lost.



Credits: Leilani Rogers

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Empathy

They cultivate deep emotional resonance, listening beyond words. This empathy allows women to feel seen, safe, and honored in their unique birthing or grieving journeys.

### Care and Nurturing

Doulas embody care through continuous presence and gentle support. Their nurturing touch restores compassion to medicalized spaces, reaffirming that care itself is an act of empowerment and sacred labor.

### Intuition

A doula senses what is needed before it's spoken. Guided by intuition, she adapts to each moment with awareness and fluidity, trusting both her inner knowing and the mother's natural rhythm.

### Holistic Thinking

By tending to body, mind, and spirit together, doulas see birth as a complete ecosystem of life. They integrate emotional, physical, and relational care, reconnecting women to wholeness.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Emotional and physical empowerment through continuous, compassionate support.
- Reconnection with body and intuition, reclaiming birth as an inner-guided process.
- Revival of women-centered care networks that restore trust and community.
- Greater confidence and agency in navigating transformative life experiences.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Doulas center presence, care, and trust in life's most powerful transitions.
- Their work revives ancient feminine practices of holding space and intuitive support.
- The doula movement reclaims birth and care as sacred, human, and empowering acts.

## RESOURCE

- [European Doula Network](#)

 SLOVENIA

# Zdravilstvo Modrih Žena

## WISE WOMEN OF HEALING AND HERBAL POWER

Parallel to monastic medicine, there was also a pagan "wise woman medicine" in Europe, a system of midwives and bone healers. Their experience was based on the oral tradition of shamanic knowledge of Germanic and Celtic healers. The healing knowledge of these women also included aphrodisiacs and hallucinogenic herbs, and was therefore considered the work of the devil. Women who used such herbs and non-Christian rituals were excommunicated, and in the late Middle Ages were persecuted as witches and burned at the stake.

As a result of the persecution of the wise women, much of their tradition and knowledge of the effects of herbs was lost.

Herbalism, the knowledge of medicinal plants (cultivated and wild) is still very present in Eastern Europe and has even been on the rise in recent times. Aunt Pehta's famous words have become part of the intangible tradition "For every disease a flower grows in the world".



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resistance

Knowledge contributed to people's independence and self-sufficient.

### Resilience

Popularization and pressure of the industrial age were very strong but people maintained contact with nature and its knowledge. This resulted in the extraordinary ability of self-healing with home-made arsenians

### Care and nurturing

It was mainly carried by women and kept for nurturing the family thru the ability of care and knowing the nature

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Less dependence on the circumstances around them and bigger sovereignty in times of lack and tragedies (war)
- Ability to feed and heal a family due to knowledge of the wild environment

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- This knowledge is helping us in being less depending on the system
- Nature is the biggest healer when we know how to collaborate
- Support self-responsibility and sovereignty

## RESOURCE

[Herbalism in the history.](#)

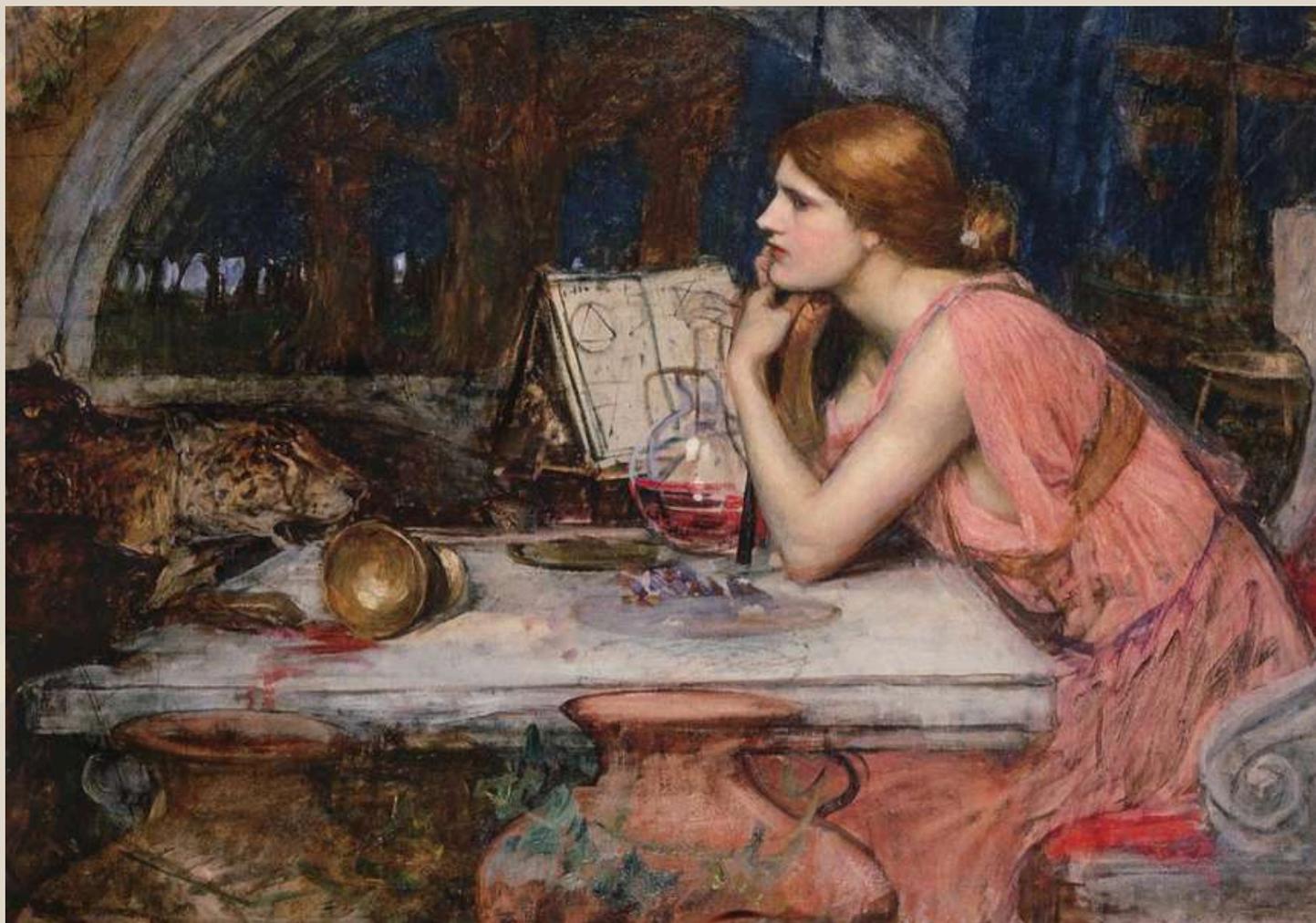
📍 ITALY

# Herbariae

## THE MEDIEVAL HERBAL WOMEN

The Herbariae were women in medieval Europe, particularly in Italy, who possessed extensive knowledge of medicinal plants and their applications. They served as healers, midwives, and custodians of herbal remedies, often operating outside formal medical institutions. Their practices included preparing infusions, ointments, and other remedies to treat various ailments.

Despite their contributions to community health, many Herbariae were persecuted during the Inquisition, accused of witchcraft due to their association with natural healing and female autonomy.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Intuition

Utilizing deep, non-verbal knowledge and spiritual perception.

### Resilience

They represent a lineage of female healers who maintained and transmitted essential health practices within their communities. Their role reinforces the importance of women's contributions to communal health and cultural continuity, offering a model of empowerment through the preservation and application of traditional knowledge.

### Care and nurturing

Providing healing and comfort to individuals and the community.

### Cyclicity

Aligning healing practices with natural and liturgical cycles.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of women's roles in health and spiritual well-being.
- Empowerment through the preservation of cultural heritage.
- Strengthening community bonds and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Herbariae were traditional female healers who used herbal knowledge for healing.
- Their practices integrated spiritual and physical aspects of well-being.
- They served as vital links in preserving and transmitting cultural and healing traditions.

## RESOURCE

[Ancient folk healers](#)

📍 GREECE

# Women Healers and Herbalists

## CUSTODIANS OF NATURE'S MEDICINE

The history of women as healers is a story of struggle, perseverance, and progress. From ancient healers and Byzantine nuns to modern scientists, women have claimed their place in the medical world despite prejudice and obstacles. The most well-known woman physician of antiquity was Agnodice, an Athenian who lived in the 4th century BC and is considered the first woman to officially practice medicine. According to legend, she disguised herself as a man in order to study under the famous physician Herophilus in Alexandria.

When her true identity was revealed, she was accused, but the women of Athens defended her right to practice medicine, leading to a change in the law that allowed women to participate in the medical profession. In addition to Agnodice, there were other female healers, especially in religious contexts, such as in the sanctuaries of Asclepius. These women practiced traditional medicine, used herbs, and worked in midwifery, playing an active role in the care of women and children.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

Continued healing practices despite social marginalization or lack of institutional support.

### Intuition

Tapped into subtle signs, ancestral wisdom, and embodied knowledge to assess and treat illness. These qualities allowed them to offer grounded, personalized care rooted in both physical and energetic understanding, shaping an empowering model of feminine healing.

### Creativity

Developed personalized remedies from available natural resources.

### Holistic thinking

Treated the whole person, acknowledging interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Respected positions in their communities.
- Strengthened intergenerational female bonds.
- Provided a platform for passing down knowledge

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Preserved healing traditions rooted in feminine wisdom.
- Gave women respected roles outside patriarchal structures.
- Demonstrated the power of embodied, intuitive knowledge.

## RESOURCE

[Pioneering women in medical science: From antiquity to Byzantium](#)

📍 SERBIA

# Majstorice

## WOMEN WHO SHAPE THE EARTH

Women have long participated in earth-building across rural Serbia — mixing clay, straw, and water, shaping earthen bricks, plastering walls, and maintaining homes with knowledge passed quietly through generations. These everyday skills were essential for keeping houses strong and warm, yet they were rarely recognised as a craft. Because this work took place inside the household and was seldom recorded, historical evidence is scattered, even though the expertise was real, practical, and crucial for rural life.

Yet as awareness grows around traditional materials and sustainable ways of living, this knowledge is resurfacing. Women earth-builders and educators of today are reviving these skills, reclaiming them as a form of mastery and cultural heritage, and re-establishing earth construction as a living, community-rooted practice shaped by women. Their approach reconnects people with the land, showing that building can be both ecological and deeply human.



Credits: Ruzica Janjic

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

Female earth-builders show resilience by transforming raw earth into safe and lasting shelter. Their grounded strength mirrors the ability to rebuild, adjust, and keep going through change.

### Horizontal Leadership

Knowledge is passed through collaboration and shared practice. Women teach and learn together, leading through care, participation, and collective responsibility rather than hierarchy.

### Creativity

Every wall becomes an act of artistic expression, sculpted, textured, and alive. Creativity turns construction into a language of identity, emotion, and belonging.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Reclaiming spatial authorship and confidence through hands-on building.
- Reviving embodied, intergenerational knowledge rooted in place and rhythm.
- Strengthening physical and emotional resilience through collaborative creation.
- Expanding ecological awareness and economic opportunity via sustainable skills.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Building with earth is both ecological action and feminist empowerment.
- Women reclaim agency, creativity, and community through regenerative craft.
- Earthen architecture transforms care into structure and resilience into beauty.

## RESOURCE

- [Women in Natural Building](#)
- [Women in earthen architecture](#)

📍 SERBIA, CROATIA, SLOVENIA

# Alijansa Ženskih Pokreta

VOICES OF CHANGE, HANDS OF SOLIDARITY

Founded in 1923 as the Feminist Alliance and later known as the Women's Movements' Alliance, this organization connected women's groups from across the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to advance women's rights through education, civic activism, and public advocacy. It united associations working on literacy, legal reform, social welfare, and women's political participation, creating one of the earliest feminist platforms in the region. By linking urban professionals, teachers, writers, and local activists, the Alliance opened pathways for women to speak, learn, and organize in public life.

Through congresses, publications, lectures, and coordinated campaigns, the Alliance fostered cooperation among local groups and supported shared goals through dialogue rather than strict hierarchy. Its work combined advocacy, mutual support, and education, helping to build one of the first national networks of feminist solidarity in the Balkans. The Alliance laid essential groundwork for women's civic participation in the early 20th century and remains an important precursor to contemporary women's organizing.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

Operating between wars and within patriarchal systems, the Alliance endured through adaptability and interregional solidarity. Their persistence carved lasting space for women's presence in public life.

### Care and Nurturing

Their activism was built on care: literacy classes, health education, food drives, and shelters. Care became political — transforming compassion into tangible social progress.

### Vision for the Future

The Alliance imagined a just society where women held equal political, economic, and civic rights. Their work planted the seeds for future generations of feminist and community movements.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Expanded access to education, civic engagement, and public leadership.
- Creation of a national network of solidarity bridging rural and urban women.
- Empowerment through advocacy, collaboration, and practical action.
- Preservation and reinterpretation of cultural heritage through feminist values.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Alliance proved that feminism thrives through collective care and shared leadership.
- Its members transformed empathy and service into tools of social and political change.
- Their legacy continues wherever women organize for equality, dignity, and regeneration.

## RESOURCE

- [The National Women's Alliance in interwar Yugoslavia](#)
- [Yugoslav feminist experience](#)

📍 SERBIA

# Kolo srpskih sestara

## WOMEN OF SERVICE AND REGENERATIVE CARE

Founded in 1903, the Kolo srpskih sestara was one of the most influential women's humanitarian organizations in Serbia and the wider Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Led by writers, teachers, and civic leaders, it connected urban and rural women around shared efforts in education, social welfare, and public care. Through collecting aid, organizing nursing courses, supporting hospitals, and assisting refugees and the poor, it created a strong culture of women's civic involvement rooted in compassion and responsibility for the community. During the Balkan Wars and WW I, the Kolo mobilized wide

networks of volunteers who cared for the wounded, accompanied evacuees, and offered practical and emotional support wherever it was needed. Its structure was decentralised and community-based, with local branches shaping activities according to the needs of their regions. Across its many initiatives, the Sisters helped build one of the earliest systems of organised women's solidarity in Serbia, weaving together humanitarian action, education, and cultural identity — a legacy that lives on through independent local groups that continue its mission today.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

Facing wars, epidemics, and repression, the Sisters stood firm. They adapted, rebuilt what was damaged, and turned care into strength, carrying endurance as a quiet force that helped keep communities together.

### Holistic Thinking

Their work cared for every part of life: body, mind, daily needs, and cultural identity. By joining education, hygiene, and tradition, they saw community well-being as something that must be supported as a whole.

### Care and Nurturing

At the heart of their mission was care for the vulnerable: the sick, orphaned, and displaced. Their service embodied love in action, proving that nurturing is a form of leadership that sustains both people and communities.

### Horizontal Leadership

The Circle practiced shared decision-making, with responsibilities carried collectively and grounded in mutual trust. Its leadership emphasized cooperation over hierarchy, where service and community care held more value than formal status.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Creation of networks of solidarity and mutual aid across urban and rural communities.
- Empowerment through training, service, and shared leadership roles.
- Preservation of cultural and feminine heritage through craft and tradition.
- Expansion of women's social and civic roles beyond the private sphere.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Sisters turned caregiving into a collective and transformative act of leadership.
- Their resilience and empathy wove healing into the fabric of society.
- Their legacy endures wherever women unite to serve, educate, and regenerate their communities.

## RESOURCE

[The Circle of Serbian Sisters](#)

📍 SERBIA

# Bubnjarke sa ulice

## FEMININE RHYTHM AS PROTEST AND PULSE

Formed in Belgrade in 2012, Bubnjarke sa ulice (“Street Drummers”) is a feminist percussion collective that uses rhythm as resistance, healing, and connection. Emerging from social movements and women’s marches, the group transforms public space through synchronized beats that amplify visibility, unity, and emotional power. Their instruments are not only drums but tools of presence — making women louder, safer, and more legible in streets where they are often ignored or erased.

Open to all women, regardless of musical background, the collective operates without hierarchy: no auditions, no leaders, only listening, pulse, and shared timing. Their drumming becomes a collective ritual — a living rhythm that supports protests, holds space for grief and joy, and invites bodies to move together. Through sound, they reclaim the street as a place of empowerment, care, and community vibration, turning every performance into a call for justice, solidarity, and feminist visibility.



Credits: Bubnjarke sa ulice's Facebook account

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resistance

Every beat challenges silence and invisibility. Drumming becomes a living protest, a way to confront oppression through embodied strength, sound, and rhythm.

### Creativity

Their performances mix percussion, voice, and movement in spontaneous expression. This creativity turns activism into art, an evolving, emotional language of liberation.

### Empathy

Playing together requires deep attunement. Each rhythm listens to the others, reflecting connection and care not only among members, but toward all the struggles they stand for.

### Horizontal Leadership

With no lead drummer or hierarchy, decisions and rhythms emerge collectively. Leadership flows through listening, cooperation, and shared timing, echoing feminist values of equality and trust.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Reclaiming visibility and voice in public spaces through collective drumming.
- Building empowerment and trust through rhythm, cooperation, and presence.
- Offering an accessible, embodied form of activism open to all women.
- Transforming emotion into movement, energy, and shared resilience.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The drummers turn rhythm into a tool of resistance, care, and solidarity.
- Their collective sound models a new form of feminist, horizontal leadership.
- Through vibration and presence, they reclaim the streets as spaces of empowerment and joy.

## RESOURCE

[Drummer streets](#)

 SARDINIA, ITALY

# Fill è Anima

## MOTHERS OF CHOSEN KINSHIP

Fillus de anima (literally, “children of the soul”) was a traditional Sardinian practice of mutual care and informal kinship. It involved entrusting a child, often from a large or struggling family, to another family, typically one without children, to be raised with love and full integration into the household, or one in a better economic situation than the first, who could therefore contribute to the expenses for the child's growth.

This was not an adoption in the legal sense, but a relational pact based on trust, affection, and social solidarity. The child maintained emotional ties with their birth family while being embraced and supported by the new one. This deeply feminine practice embodies care, mutual support, and the collective sharing of responsibilities within rural communities.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Care

Expressed through the long-term nurturing of children outside biological kinship, care is the foundation of this practice.

### Empathy

The decision to entrust or welcome a child is based on deep emotional sensitivity and the capacity to feel with others.

### Intuition

These relationships are often guided by an inner knowing, beyond formal structures, relying on emotional intelligence.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of caregiving as a community-forming and socially valuable act.
- Empowerment through inter-family cooperation and emotional leadership.
- Creation of informal support systems that reduce isolation and build resilience.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Fillus de anima reveals the power of women to create kinship and care beyond bloodlines.
- It strengthens community through trust, reciprocity, and emotional responsibility.
- It offers a model of regeneration and inclusion deeply rooted in rural wisdom.

## RESOURCE

- [In Sardinia, land of fill'e anima](#)

SERBIA

# Čuvarke Slave

## WOMEN WHO CARRY SLAVA THROUGH TIME, FIRE, AND BREAD

Slava, the celebration of a family's patron saint, is one of Serbia's most profound living traditions, and women are its silent guardians. Through gestures of care, timing, and embodied knowledge, they sustain the ritual's rhythm: kneading the ceremonial bread, preparing the wheat offering, lighting the candle, tending the incense, and transmitting ancestral memory through words, sequence, and touch. Their actions weave together body, spirit, and land, turning domestic space into sacred ground and keeping continuity alive even in times of upheaval.

Across rural and urban households alike, this role has remained largely unchanged: women know the date, the sequence, and the meaning of each element. Today, younger women continue this responsibility, sometimes adding their own practical adjustments, but the core remains the same — they safeguard a ritual that holds family identity and tradition.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Holistic Thinking

In Slava, body, ancestry, and nature are one cycle. Women intuitively sustain this harmony, recognising that ritual and emotion are all part of the same living system.

### Care and Nurturing

Women anchor Slava through attentive gestures — preparing the food, tending the fire, and guiding the sequence of the ritual. Their care sustains both family and tradition, making the home a place of continuity and shared belonging.

### Creativity

From sculpting the ritual bread to arranging the table, women express beauty and symbolism through craft. Their creativity infuses the sacred with tenderness and personal identity.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Slava becomes a living ritual of care, rhythm, and continuity through women's hands.
- Their embodied knowledge keeps the home's sacred order alive and strengthens family bonds.
- By tending bread, fire, and intention, women renew community identity year after year.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Women preserve Slava's structure, rhythm, and memory across generations.
- Their care and creativity sustain the ritual as a source of renewal.
- Through Slava, women connect past and future — keeping identity alive.

## RESOURCE

[Slava, celebration of family saint patron's day.](#)

PALESTINE

# Hikaye

## WOMEN AS GUARDIANS OF ORAL HISTORY

Hikaye is a traditional form of oral storytelling practiced by Palestinian women, particularly elder women in rural areas. These stories, passed down through generations in local dialects such as fallahi (rural) and madani (urban), explore themes related to everyday life, family relationships, and social constraints, often centering on female protagonists who overcome adversity through cleverness and courage. Told in intimate domestic spaces, usually during winter evenings and in the presence of women and children,

hikaye served as both entertainment and an informal form of education and transmission of values. These stories often reflected the realities of life in patriarchal societies and provided women with a voice and a symbolic space to process and challenge their roles.

It's inscribed in 2008 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO)



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

These stories often featured female characters who resisted injustice and found paths to self-determination.

### Care and Nurturing

Storytelling was an act of emotional care and cultural education for children and the community.

### Creativity

The stories are imaginative, symbolic, and often reinvented by each storyteller.

### Vision for the future

Hikaye stories prepared listeners to imagine different futures and empowered women to reclaim narrative agency.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge through female voices.
- Empowerment through reclaiming narrative space and symbolic leadership.
- Creation of emotional and intellectual bonds between generations of women.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Hikaye is a creative and intimate form of cultural expression led by women.
- It fosters resilience, care, and intergenerational learning through storytelling.
- It empowers women by placing them at the center of cultural transmission and imagination.

## RESOURCE

- [Unesco - Palestinian Hikaye](#)

 GREECE

# Panigira

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FESTIVALS AND RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

Women have long been central to the Panigiria, the religious festivals and community celebrations held across Greece, especially in rural areas. They organize preparations, cook communal meals, maintain ritual order, and ensure that traditions are passed on. In many villages, women lead the days-long process of gathering ingredients, preparing offerings, and coordinating the feast that honors the local saint. Their work sustains the heart of the panigyri: hospitality, devotion, and communal togetherness.

Women also preserve songs, dances, and ritual gestures that give each festival its unique character. As caretakers of memory and culture, they hold the lineage of the celebration itself.

Through their leadership, Panigiria become more than festivals, they are living expressions of identity, continuity, and women's essential role in keeping the spiritual and social fabric of Greece alive.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Horizontal Leadership

Women lead important cultural and spiritual gatherings, promoting unity and social cohesion.

### Resilience

In the face of economic and social challenges, women keep these traditions alive, ensuring the survival of cultural heritage.

### Holistic Thinking

By overseeing the preparation of traditional foods, rituals, and community events, they maintain a deep connection to both spiritual and cultural practices.

### Care and Nurturing

The role of women in preparing food, welcoming guests, and ensuring the comfort of all participants highlights their caring nature and commitment to community welfare.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Provides women with leadership opportunities within the community.
- Strengthens women's role in preserving cultural traditions and fostering community unity.
- Creates a space for women to practice their cultural and spiritual values, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to society

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Women play a central role in preserving cultural traditions and religious practices.
- Empower women by giving them leadership in community activities.
- Strengthen the bonds of local communities through shared, inclusive events.

## RESOURCE

- [Greek Panigyri: The Tradition of Celebrating Saints and More](#)

📍 BALKANS (SERBIA, N. MACEDONIA, BULGARIA, ROMANIA, GREECE)

# Dodole

## RAIN CALLING WOMEN OF RHYTHM, LEAVES, AND SKY

The Dodole were young women or girls who walked, sang, and danced through villages across the Balkans to invoke rain during times of drought. Dressed in fresh leaves, grasses, and flowers, they moved barefoot from house to house while the community sprinkled them with water. Their songs and steps carried a shared appeal for renewal, linking human need with the rhythms of weather, land, and season. In their presence, the boundary between people and nature briefly softened.

Rooted in ancient Slavic traditions, the ritual highlights women's role in responding to ecological challenges and maintaining the balance between community and environment. Today, the Dodole are often revisited as a symbol of collective resilience, ecological awareness, and women's embodied connection to natural cycles — a reminder that care for the Earth has long been expressed through shared movement, voice, and community ritual.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

The Dodole embody the cycle of drought and rain, need and renewal. Their movement mirrors natural rhythms and reminds the community of its dependence on ecological balance.

### Regeneration

Dodole do not only ask for rain — they invoke regeneration. Through rhythm, vulnerability, and intention, they activate the cycle of growth, return, and renewal. They call life back to a parched world.

### Empathy

The Dodole translate the suffering of the land and people into song. Their empathy transforms collective fear into hope, making emotion a source of connection rather than despair.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Dodole reconnect women with nature's cycles through shared movement and song.
- Their rain-calling ritual turns collective rhythm into healing and resilience.
- Through inherited gestures, they renew ecological awareness and community bonds.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Dodole show how feminine ritual re-opens pathways between people and the living landscape.
- Their songs carry the wisdom of cycles, renewal, and communal hope.
- Re-imagining Dodole today reconnects women with creativity, intuition, and ecological belonging.

## RESOURCE

- [The Thraco-Dacian Origin of the Paparuda/Dodola Rain-Making Ritual](#)
- [erperuna Slavic Goddess: The Rainmaker](#)

📍 SLAVIC REGION

# Rusalka

## WATER SPIRITS, SOUL CARRIERS, AND WILD WARNINGS

Rusalka, water spirits of Slavic mythology, embody grief, memory, and the cyclical return of life. Originally understood as the restless souls of young women who died before their time — often by drowning or under unjust circumstances — they appeared during Rusal Week in early summer, when the boundary between worlds was believed to thin. In folklore, they were both feared and respected as beings connected to water, fertility, and the consequences of neglect or injustice.

Today, women across Eastern Europe sometimes reinterpret the Rusalka figure through storytelling, song, and nature-based ritual. These contemporary practices do not recreate historical rites, but use the myth as a symbolic space to transform sorrow, explore ancestral memory, and reconnect with water as a source of intuition, ecological awareness, and renewal.



Credits: Ivan Kramskoi, Rusalki

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Regeneration

Rusalke, though born from stories of loss, return each year — symbolising nature’s cycle of renewal. In modern interpretations, they help women transform grief into insight and reconnect with the regenerative power of water and seasonal rhythms.

### Empathy

As spirits of young women who died before their time, Rusalke reflect unspoken sorrow and unfinished stories. Honoring their myth invites a deeper listening to pain and memory — opening space for compassion and connection in the community.

### Intuition

Living at the threshold between worlds, Rusalke embody knowledge that comes through feeling, water, and dream rather than reason. Their myth invites women to trust what is subtle, sensed, and remembered — awakening inner knowing.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Reclaiming the body as a space for intuition, memory, and emotional truth.
- Strengthening connections among women through shared stories and reflection.
- Offering a symbolic way to process ecological and ancestral grief.
- Reviving ancestral myth as a bridge between humans, nature, and the unseen.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Rusalke reveal feminine power returning through emotion, memory, and nature.
- Their myth transforms grief into a reminder of renewal and the cycles that sustain life.
- Reclaiming them reconnects women with resilience, intuition, and cyclical flow.

## RESOURCE

[Rusalka from Slavic folklore](#)

 SERBIA

# Pirotske ćilimarke

## WEAVING AND TEXTILE PRODUCTION SEEPERS OF COLOR, SYMBOL, AND WOMEN'S SPACE

The Pirot carpet (ćilim) is a double-sided handwoven textile from southeastern Serbia, crafted for centuries by women who turned wool and color into symbols of protection and belonging. Its unique technique — with an identical front and back — makes it a rare example of perfectly double-sided weaving. Created in winter months through shared labor, song, and storytelling, each carpet carries ancestral motifs that link land, body, and spirit, making weaving a women's language of skill, memory, and solidarity.

Today, Pirot's weavers continue this tradition through cooperatives, workshops, and cultural initiatives, sustaining a practice that embodies creativity, care, and resilience across generations. By preserving patterns, techniques, and stories passed from hand to hand, they keep alive a living heritage in which women's artistry and community identity remain inseparable.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Creativity

Within inherited geometric patterns, each weaver shapes her own rhythm through color, precision, and balance. Her creativity emerges through patience and mastery — beauty sustained by repetition, discipline, and devotion.

### Regeneration

This tradition renews cultural memory and community life. New generations of weavers are restoring natural dyes, reviving forgotten techniques, and weaving fresh vitality into ancestral patterns.

### Care and Nurturing

Many Pirot carpets were woven for marriage, home protection, or life transitions. Through slow, intentional work, women wove care into the fabric — supporting others while finding rhythm and meaning themselves.

### Resilience

Weaving demands strength, precision, and perseverance. Through war, poverty, and social change, women kept the loom alive — turning thread into livelihood and craft into quiet, enduring agency.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Preservation and transmission of ancestral, intergenerational knowledge and identity.
- Economic independence and dignified income through cooperative and local production.
- Emotional balance and focus gained through rhythmic, meditative craft.
- Strengthened community ties and revaluation of feminine labor as cultural heritage.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Pirot weaving turns creativity, care, and resilience into a living heritage.
- Each carpet is both craftsmanship and cultural memory — a vessel of identity and women's skill.
- The loom becomes a place of renewal for women, community, and tradition.

## RESOURCE

- [Securing Serbia's cultural heritage: the case of "Kilim of Pirot"](#)
- [Pirot kilims](#)

📍 ANCIENT GREECE AND BALKANS

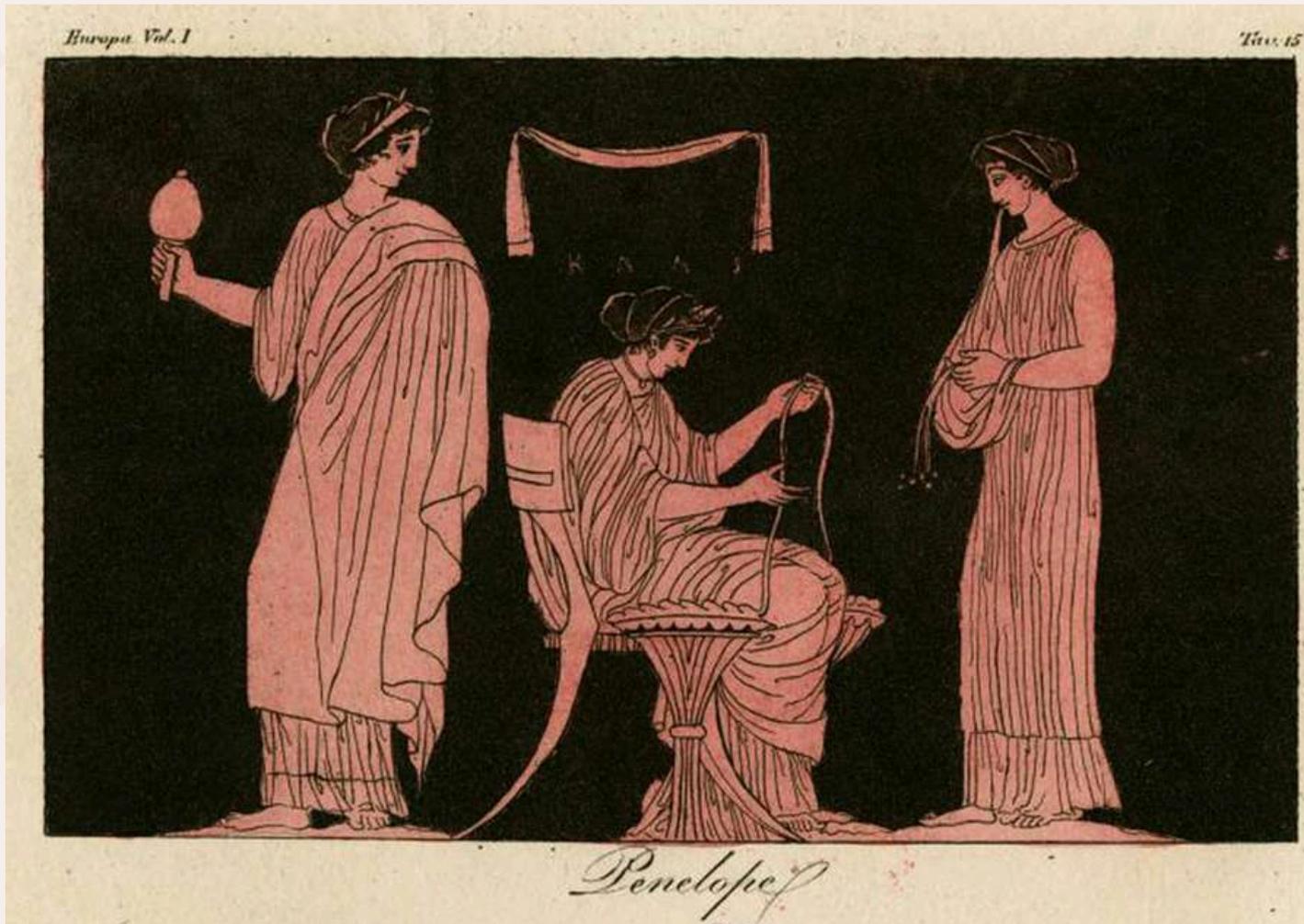
# Weavers of stories

## ANCIENT GREEK SEAMSTRESSES TELL STORIES THROUGH WEAVING

Weaving was a foundational skill among women in ancient Greek and Balkan societies, serving both domestic and economic purposes. They created clothing, ritual garments, and trade goods, embedding symbolic language into patterns and motifs. Research shows that traditional weaving also functioned as a cultural archive: each region preserved distinct designs, colors, and techniques that transmitted identity, beliefs, and social status.

Women learned these skills through embodied, intergenerational teaching, turning the loom into a space of creativity and community.

In many areas, woven textiles were essential for dowries, local trade, and ceremonial life, giving women an important economic and social role. Through their hands, weaving became not only labor but storytelling, a living continuity of heritage, artistry, and feminine wisdom.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Creativity

Manifested in intricate designs and symbolic motifs.

### Vision for the future

Passed techniques through generations. These qualities turned weaving into both a practical skill and a vessel for storytelling, cultural preservation, and spiritual meaning-making.

### Resistance

Required for long hours of detailed handwork.

### Resilience

Maintained craftsmanship through economic hardship.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Created income and self-sufficiency
- Honored female artistry and cultural symbolism
- Offers meditative and spiritual expression

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Elevated domestic skills to communal and economic importance.
- Embedded women's values and identity into everyday material culture.
- Preserved traditions through generational teaching.

## RESOURCE

[Traditional Weaving and local patterns](#)

SLOVENIA

# Slovenska Kleklarica

## THE SLOVENIAN LACE MAKER

The Slovenian Lace Maker is the guardian of one of Slovenia's most delicate yet powerful women's traditions: the art of bobbin lace-making. This practice is deeply rooted in the regions of Idrija, Žiri, and Železniki, where lace-making has been part of women's everyday life since the 17th century, shaped by work, natural rhythms, and community. Lace-making takes place on a round pillow on which the "papierček," the pattern, is pinned. With the help of wooden bobbins, the lace maker patiently weaves the threads into fine, shimmering lace.

This quiet dance of clicking bobbins creates countless connections – threads, families, and generations. Lace-making was once an essential source of income for women, who sustained their households in mining and mountainous areas where other economic opportunities were scarce. Today, lace-making in Slovenia is not only a matter of tradition but also a space for innovation: creating contemporary patterns, collaborating with designers, and passing the craft on to younger generations who recognize in it a blend of cultural identity, artistry, and meditative patience.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Ciclicity

Like nature, lace-making unfolds in patterns, returns, knots, and rhythms. Women who lace embody the gentle power of cycles, growth, and repetition.

### Resistance

Lace makers ensure that ancestral skills are preserved and developed. Their work is a quiet act of resistance against forgetting: a declaration that women's creativity deserves respect.

### Vision for the future

By teaching younger generations, lace makers help shape cultural continuity and a sustainable sense of place.

### Care and Nurturing

Patience, gentleness, precision, and rhythmic movement reflect archetypal feminine qualities of protection and creation.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Strengthens identity and confidence through ancestral knowledge.
- Cultivates emotional balance, patience, and inner resilience.
- Nurtures creativity and purpose, supporting women in shaping future generations.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Lace Maker embodies regeneration and the living heritage of foremothers.
- Her craft unites women across generations through creativity and care.
- She transforms tradition into a symbol of endurance and sustainable beauty.

## RESOURCE

- [UNESCO – Bobbin lacemaking in Slovenia](#) and [Idrija Lace School](#)
- Idrija Lace School and Idrija Municipal Museum (Lace Collection)
- UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Documentation Team

 GREECE

# Grammata

## A CUSTODIAN OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION

In rural Greece, the Grammata woman was often the custodian of local knowledge, literacy, oral traditions, and herbal medicine, especially in communities where formal education was limited. She taught children to read, preserved songs and stories, and practiced healing through plants and ritual care. Studies on women's education in ancient Greece show that, despite social restrictions, many women developed significant intellectual and practical competence within the household and community.

The Grammata woman embodied this blend of informal learning and embodied wisdom. As a teacher, healer, and guardian of cultural memory, she ensured the transmission of knowledge across generations, sustaining both the intellectual and spiritual life of her community.



Credits: Lucas Cranach the Elder Portrait of a Jurist

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Holistic Thinking

The Grammata woman preserved an interconnected understanding of life, medicine, and knowledge, often blending tradition with practical knowledge.

### Intuition

Often using instinctual knowledge in healing and teaching, she bridged the sacred and practical aspects of community life.

### Vision for the future

Through education and the preservation of local knowledge, she empowered the next generation of women and men to thrive within their cultural context.

### Adaptability

The Grammata woman adapted ancient traditions to modern challenges, ensuring their survival through the generations

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Created income and self-sufficiency
- Honored female artistry and cultural symbolism
- Offers meditative and spiritual expression

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Elevated domestic skills to communal and economic importance.
- Embedded women's values and identity into everyday material culture.
- Preserved traditions through generational teaching.

## RESOURCE

[Women's education, knowledge and competence in Ancient Greece](#)

GREECE

# Priestess of Artemis

## GUARDIANS OF THE MOON AND THE WILD

Priestesses served in temples dedicated to Artemis, goddess of wilderness, the hunt, and protector of women. They performed rituals, managed temple life, guided initiations, and educated young girls in spiritual and practical skills. According to studies on Artemis and women's roles in ancient Greek religion, these priestesses embodied a rare form of female authority: they oversaw offerings, interpreted omens, safeguarded sacred spaces, and led major festivals such as the Brauronia, where girls enacted rites of passage into womanhood.

Through their leadership, priestesses of Artemis upheld female-centered religious traditions, blending spirituality, education, and community care.



Iphigenia, dressed as a priestess of Artemis, leaves the temple. A fresco fragment recovered from the ruins of Pompeii (House of Lucius Caecilius Lucundus).

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Holistic Thinking

The Priestesses of Artemis understood the interconnectedness of nature, the divine, and the cycles of life, embodying a vision of balance that extended to the protection of young girls and women.

### Intuition

As spiritual intermediaries, the Priestesses used their intuition to channel the will of Artemis, guiding their communities through ritual and ensuring the sanctity of the temple and its practices.

### Cyclicity

Their roles reflected the natural cycles, particularly those tied to the moon, which Artemis ruled, as well as the transition of young girls into adulthood, symbolizing the ongoing renewal of life.

### Empathy

Their deep empathy for young girls and women was central to their role, offering spiritual guidance, protection, and care, particularly in rites of passage that marked the transition to adulthood.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Offered high-ranking spiritual roles
- Affirmed the sacredness of feminine identity
- Gave women access to symbolic and cultural authority

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Reinforced reverence for women in sacred roles
- Allowed women to shape cultural values through ritual
- Preserved female-centered spirituality

## RESOURCE

- [Women of the Gods: The Status of Priestesses in Ancient Greece](#)
- [Artemis and the Role of Women in Ancient Greek Religion](#)
- Blundell, S. (1995). Women in Ancient Greece

GREECE

# Thesmophoria

## DEMETER'S FESTIVALS

Thesmophoria was an ancient Greek fertility festival held exclusively for women, especially married women, in honor of Demeter and Persephone. Celebrated in autumn during the sowing season, it centered on agricultural renewal, women's cycles, and communal well-being. Over three days, participants performed rituals such as fasting, ritual descent, and the unearthing of decomposed offerings to ensure the fertility of the fields and the prosperity of the community.

According to modern analyses of Demeter's festivals, Thesmophoria also functioned as a powerful space of female autonomy: women governed the rites, interpreted signs, and collectively safeguarded the rhythms of life, agriculture, and regeneration, a tradition whose echoes still inform contemporary interpretations of feminine-centered ritual practice.



Thesmophoria, a painting by Francis Davis Millet (h.1894). Credit: Public domain / Wikimedia Commons

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Horizontal leadership

All participants shared responsibility for rituals, reflecting a communal, non-hierarchical structure led by feminine collaboration.

### Cyclicity

The festival mirrors nature's rhythms, celebrating seasonal change and the cycle of life, death, and rebirth through the myth of Persephone.

### Care and Nurturing

Women honored the earth and each other as life-givers, connecting deeply with their role in nourishing family and community.

### Vision for the future

The practices expressed hope and spiritual intention for community renewal, agricultural abundance, and generational continuity.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Provided sacred space for female autonomy and ritual leadership.
- Strengthened social cohesion and support networks among women.
- Honored women's vital role in regeneration, agriculture, and communal continuity.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- A powerful example of women-led spiritual and agricultural tradition.
- Celebrated the sacred feminine connection to Earth, fertility, and cycles.
- Empowered women through collective ritual, mutual care, and symbolic leadership

## RESOURCE

[Demeter's Festivals: The Thesmophoria and Their Modern Interpretations](#)

📍 SLAVIC REGION

# Mokoš

## WEAVER OF LIFE AND PROTECTOR OF WOMEN'S LABOR

Mokoš, the ancient Slavic goddess of earth, fertility, and women's labor, embodies the sacred link between care, creation, and the cycles of life. Protector of mothers, weavers, and harvesters, she represents the strength and resilience rooted in daily, sustaining work. In Serbian and broader Slavic traditions, her presence endures through women's domestic, agricultural, and textile practices — spinning, weaving, and preserving — acts that maintain balance in families and communities.

Today, Mokoš's archetype is reinterpreted through eco-feminism, women's circles, regenerative agriculture, and permaculture. Her qualities — grounded care, cyclical wisdom, and practical labor — inspire women to reclaim nurturing, craft, and community stewardship as forms of embodied leadership. Through herbal knowledge, soil tending, food preservation, and the revival of women's crafts, Mokoš becomes a living symbol of ecological responsibility and creative, life-sustaining power.



Credits: Milena Milojevic

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Holistic Thinking

Mokoš unites home, earth, and body as one living system. Her wisdom shows that caring for land, family, and community are interconnected acts that sustain balance and life.

### Care and Nurturing

Mokoš honors care as sacred, life-sustaining labor — feeding, raising, healing, and tending what must endure. She reminds us that nurturing is not passive, but the generative force at the heart of community life.

### Creativity

As the goddess of spinning and weaving, Mokoš transforms raw materials into pattern, beauty, and meaning. Her creativity is life-sustaining — binding practicality and imagination into one continuous thread.

### Resilience

As an embodiment of endurance, Mokoš reminds women of their strength through seasons of work, hardship, and renewal. Her power lives in persistence — the quiet heroism woven into everyday labor.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of domestic and agricultural labor as sacred, creative, and essential.
- Strengthening intergenerational ties through shared practices and ancestral wisdom.
- Cultivating emotional resilience and grounded self-sufficiency.
- Reconnecting women with natural cycles and sustainable community life.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Mokoš turns care and labor into sources of strength, creativity, and grounded leadership.
- Her energy reminds us that sustainability begins in women's everyday acts of tending and craft.
- Reclaiming Mokoš reconnects women to earth's rhythms, ancestral wisdom, and collective resilience.

## RESOURCE

- [Mokosz/Mokosh – Slavic Great Mother and Protector of Women – Slavic Mythology Saturday](#)
- [Feminism and Religion](#)

SLAVIC REGION  
**Živa**



GUARDIAN OF VITALITY, WATER, AND SACRED FIRE

Živa, the Slavic goddess of life, vitality, and healing, embodies the sacred force that flows through water, plants, and the human body. Although her name was preserved among West Slavs, her qualities endure throughout Serbian seasonal traditions — in Đurđevdan river bathing, Ivanjdan herb gathering, midsummer fires, and blessings of the home and hearth. These rituals, led largely by women, invoke health, fertility, and renewal, echoing Živa’s ancient association with growing life, elemental balance, and the joy of being alive.

Today, Živa’s archetype inspires holistic healing, herbalism, gardening, and ecological homemaking. Women who tend seeds, soil, and seasonal rhythms embody her life-giving presence in simple, practical ways. Through connection with water, plants, and the senses, Živa nurtures embodied awareness, inner resilience, and harmony with the cycles that sustain both land and community.



Siwa from *L'Antiquité expliquée* by Bernard de Montfaucon, 1722

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Regeneration

Živa restores vitality through the natural cycles of cleansing, warmth, and renewal. The seasonal practices of water and fire remind women of their innate capacity to heal, replenish, and begin again.

### Care and Nurturing

As a guardian of life's daily sustenance, Živa teaches that tending to the body, food, and home is sacred labor. Through such care, women sustain both their own vitality and the well-being of the community.

### Creativity

Živa awakens the inner creative spark — expressed through song, herbal craft, and seasonal ritual. Under her influence, creativity becomes a form of celebration, healing, and the joyful making of life.

### Intuition

Živa's wisdom is elemental and embodied. She speaks through sensation — warmth, movement, breath — guiding women to trust their inner rhythm and respond with fluidity to life's changing flow.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Renewing physical and emotional vitality through embodied, nature-based practices.
- Reconnecting women with body wisdom, sensuality, and elemental balance.
- Empowering care, craft, and domestic knowledge as sacred, creative acts.
- Strengthening community and sisterhood through shared seasonal traditions.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Živa embodies the regenerative, sensual power of life itself.
- Her seasonal practices restore balance between body, emotion, and the natural world.
- Reclaiming her energy revives women's capacity to live, lead, and heal in harmony with the elements.

## RESOURCE

- [Ziva Slavic Goddess: Embodiment of Life and Fertility](#)
- [Veliki srpan / August, harvest with the goddess Živa](#)

 PUGLIA, ITALY

# Panattare

## THE BREAD WOMEN OF PUGLIA

The Panattare are women from Puglia, especially from the town of Altamura, who have preserved the ancient practice of traditional bread-making. This practice dates back to at least the 18th century and was historically centered around public wood-fired ovens (forni a legna), where women brought loaves marked with wooden stamps bearing family symbols. Bread-making was a female-led activity, taking place at home during the early hours of the day and culminating in communal baking.

The bread, made with durum wheat semolina and natural yeast, was not only nourishment, but also a cultural and symbolic element of rural life. The Panattare represented resilience, community identity, and feminine knowledge transmitted orally through generations. Even today, this tradition is kept alive as a form of cultural heritage, and many women continue to pass down these techniques within families and local bakeries.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Vision for the future

Preserving this tradition supports food sovereignty and cultural transmission to future generations.

### Intuition

Women relied on experience and sensory awareness to judge ingredients, timing, and baking conditions.

### Care and Nurturing

Bread was made for the nourishment and wellbeing of the family and wider community.

### Cyclicity

The bread-making process follows the rhythms of the week, agricultural seasons, and family life.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Cultural empowerment through the preservation of ancestral knowledge.
- Economic opportunities linked to artisanal food production and local tourism.
- Strengthening of community and intergenerational bonds through shared skills.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Panattare preserve an ancestral craft that nourishes both body and identity.
- Their work is rooted in care, rhythm, and the sharing of knowledge.
- They show how traditional women's practices are essential to rural resilience and regeneration.

## RESOURCE

- [Bread and power](#)

 SARDINIA, ITALY

# S'abbrebadora

TRADITIONAL HEALER OF THE EVIL EYE - SA MEXINA DE S'OGU

Was the woman responsible for the diagnosis and treatment of malocchio (evil eye) in Sardinian folk medicine. Rooted in a tradition passed down orally through matrilineal lines (mother to daughter or grandmother to granddaughter), this role combined knowledge of herbs, symbols, numbers, ritual timing, and spiritual intuition. The healing ritual involved the use of everyday elements, water, oil, salt, wheat, amulets, transformed through gesture, breath (brebus), and sacred rhythm into tools of purification and protection.

These rituals acted on both symbolic and physical levels: objects were immersed, prayers whispered, and signs observed (such as bubbles forming in water) to diagnose and expel negative influences. The healer's timing was attuned to lunar cycles and calendrical moments, reinforcing the deep connection between women's healing roles and natural rhythms. She was often a respected elder, offering emotional and energetic care to individuals and entire communities.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

Her practices followed lunar phases and calendrical cycles, aligning healing with natural time.

### Empathy

She tuned into the unspoken distress of others, offering comfort and trust in moments of vulnerability.

### Care and Nurturing

She protected the physical and emotional health of individuals through gentle yet powerful acts of care.

### Creativity

The healer adapted rituals, gestures, and objects according to each case, improvising with knowledge and imagination.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Revitalization of ancestral healing knowledge passed down through female lines.
- Empowerment through reconnection with intuitive and embodied practices.
- Recognition of emotional and energetic care as a transformative form of leadership.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Sa mexina de s'ogu combined ritual, intuition, and ancestral wisdom to protect and heal.
- Her actions aligned with natural cycles and symbolic meanings rooted in community life.
- She offers a powerful model of rural female empowerment based on care, connection, and quiet authority.

## RESOURCE

[Witches of Sardinia: everything you need to know](#)

📍 SARDINIA, ITALY

# S'argia

## THE RITUAL DANCE OF THE ARGIA

The ritu de s'argia is a traditional Sardinian healing ritual performed mainly by women to cure the effects of a mythical insect bite, the argia, a multicoloured, dancing and venomous creature, believed to affect men with pain, confusion, or trance-like states. The ritual was conducted by women over three days through music, symbolic actions, and dance.

The ritual included three explorations: musical (playing different melodies to see which pleased the Argia), dress-based (dressing the afflicted in

symbolic female garments to identify the Argia's "civil status": child, bride, mother, widow, etc.), and verbal (interrogation and identification). Once identified, the women danced specific dances around the patient, enacting symbolic, gendered, and transformative performances to exorcise the illness. While the patient (usually male) lay down in pain, the women danced in circles, expressing both individual care and communal power. The ritual was a form of therapeutic theatre—symbolic, embodied, and socially cohesive



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Empathy

The entire ritual was rooted in shared pain, care for the afflicted, and emotional solidarity.

### Intuition

They responded to subtle signs from the patient to identify the Argia's nature and guide the healing process.

### Care and Nurturing

The ritu de s'argia is a female-led ritual that transforms pain through collective dance and symbolism. It activates ancestral feminine qualities such as care, empathy, intuition, and creativity. It offers a model of healing rooted in community, ritual time, and gendered power.

### Creativity

The women enacted improvised rituals combining music, dance, clothing, and symbolic gestures in complex healing performances.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Validation of embodied and symbolic forms of feminine knowledge.
- Empowerment through creative, intuitive, and collaborative roles in community healing.
- Reinforcement of female leadership in cultural continuity and resilience.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The ritu de s'argia is a female-led ritual that transforms pain through collective dance and symbolism.
- It activates ancestral feminine qualities such as care, empathy, intuition, and creativity.
- It offers a model of healing rooted in community, ritual time, and gendered power.

## RESOURCE

[The dance of the argia](#)

📍 PUGLIA, ITALY

# Pizzica

## WOMEN'S DANCE OF HEALING AND ECSTASY

The pizzica is a traditional dance from Salento, Southern Italy, whose roots are intertwined with rural poverty, women's oppression, and the myth of the spider bite (taranta). Historically, it was part of healing rituals meant to cure women (and occasionally men) believed to be "possessed" or "poisoned" by a venomous spider. These rituals took place at home and in sacred spaces, culminating in music-fueled dance sessions that were physically and emotionally intense. Anthropologists like Ernesto De Martino and Annabella Rossi have

interpreted tarantismo not as a reaction to a spider bite, but as a culturally accepted way for women to express anger, exhaustion, and psychological suffering under patriarchal structures. Dance, music, and trance became a space for emotional release and collective support. Women were both the "tarantate" (those who danced) and the "curatrici" (those who played the tambourines), creating a space of mutual care and sisterhood, even within a system that tried to silence them.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Adaptability

Women redefined the limits imposed by society, using cultural forms to reclaim space and agency.

### Resilience

Women resisted psychological and cultural oppression by transforming pain into movement.

### Care and Nurturing

Healing rituals led by and for women, centered on emotional and spiritual recovery.

### Creativity

Dance and music became tools of self-expression, symbolic language, and emotional communication.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of emotional and spiritual healing as powerful and legitimate.
- Empowerment through cultural practices that allowed space for expression and support.
- Reclaiming narrative and symbolic control over one's body and voice.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Pizzica was a collective female response to patriarchal repression through music, dance, and ritual.
- It created spaces of healing, resistance, and care within oppressive systems.
- It continues to inspire as a symbol of feminine resilience, expression, and solidarity

## RESOURCE

[Pizzica, spiders, and patriarchy.](#)

📍 ITALY

# Segnatrici

THE HEALING WOMEN OF THE ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE

The Segnatrici are women who practice an ancient form of folk healing known as *segnatura*, prevalent in rural Italy, particularly in regions like Emilia-Romagna. This tradition, rooted in pre-Christian times, involves the use of symbolic gestures, whispered prayers, and the sign of the cross to heal ailments such as shingles, burns, sprains, and psychological distress. The knowledge is traditionally passed down orally, often during significant times of the year like Christmas Eve or the eve of Saint John's Day.

The Segnatrici serve as custodians of communal well-being, blending spiritual insight with practical healing.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Intuition

Utilizing deep, non-verbal knowledge and spiritual perception

### Resilience

Preserving and practicing traditional knowledge despite societal changes

### Care and Nurturing

Providing healing and comfort to individuals and the community.

### Holistic Thinking

Integrating physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of healing.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of women's roles in health and spiritual well-being.
- Empowerment through the preservation of cultural heritage.
- Strengthening community bonds and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Segnatrici are traditional female healers who use symbolic rituals for healing.
- Their practices integrate spiritual and physical aspects of well-being.
- They serve as vital links in preserving and transmitting cultural and healing traditions

## RESOURCE

[Marking healing: ethnosemiotics of a magical act](#)

📍 ITALY

# Acqua di San Giovanni

THE WATER OF SAINT JOHN

The Acqua di San Giovanni is a traditional Italian ritual practiced on the night between June 23rd and 24th, coinciding with the summer solstice and the feast of Saint John the Baptist. Women collect a variety of herbs and flowers, such as St. John's Wort (iperico), lavender, rosemary, sage, and mint, placing them in a bowl of water and leaving it outdoors overnight to absorb the dew, believed to have purifying and protective properties.

The following morning, this fragrant water is used for washing the face and hands, serving as a ritual for health, love, and fortune.



"Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May" John William Waterhouse

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Ciclicity

Aligned with the solstice, marking a transition in nature's cycle.

### Intuition

Selecting specific herbs and flowers based on traditional knowledge.

### Care and Nurturing

The act of preparing and using the water for well-being.

### Holistic Thinking

Integrating natural elements for physical and spiritual health.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Empowerment through the preservation and transmission of cultural traditions
- Strengthening community bonds and intergenerational relationships.
- Promotion of holistic health and well-being

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Acqua di San Giovanni is a ritual deeply rooted in Italian tradition, emphasizing purification and protection.
- Women play a central role in preserving and transmitting this practice.
- The ritual fosters community cohesion and connects individuals to natural cycles.

## RESOURCE

[The night of St. John and women](#)

 GREECE

# Koumbara

## BRIDE'S SPONSOR IN TRADITIONAL GREEK WEDDINGS

The Koumbara, or female wedding sponsor, supports the bride emotionally and spiritually throughout the wedding and her transition into married life. Beyond offering guidance and reassurance, she orchestrates key rituals, helps coordinate the ceremony, and acts as a bridge between families to foster unity and harmony. As described in contemporary Greek wedding customs, the Koumbara also takes on practical responsibilities: assisting with the stefana (wedding crowns), overseeing ceremonial blessings, and ensuring that traditions are honored with dignity.

Her role extends well beyond the wedding day, becoming a lifelong mentor and symbolic sister who accompanies the couple with wisdom, care, and steadfast support.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Horizontal leadership

Leads through collaboration, not authority, helping foster harmony among families and the community.

### Empathy

Offers emotional and spiritual support, helping the bride navigate major life transitions.

### Creativity

Crafts meaningful rituals and celebrations, personalizing the event to fit the couple's story and heritage. These qualities collectively promote a grounded, emotionally intelligent form of leadership rooted in relational care and cultural continuity.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Establishes networks of female mentorship and solidarity.
- Honors emotional intelligence as a form of leadership.
- Reinforces women's social roles in ceremonial life.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Empowers women as spiritual and emotional guides.
- Elevates supportive roles to forms of leadership.
- Maintains intergenerational traditions

## RESOURCE

[What does a Koumbara do?](#)

📍 GREECE

# Pythia

## ORACLE AND VOICE OF THE DIVINE

In Ancient Greece, women held significant religious authority as priestesses in temples dedicated to major deities. The most renowned among them was the Pythia, the Oracle of Delphi, who served Apollo and delivered prophecies that shaped political decisions, warfare, and civic life.

As recent research highlights, priestesses were not marginal figures, they oversaw temple administration, managed sacred property, organized festivals, and performed daily rituals essential to maintaining divine favor.

Many held positions for life and enjoyed social prestige, financial independence, and public respect unusual for women of the time.

Beyond Delphi, priestesses served in temples across Greece, ensuring ritual continuity, interpreting omens, educating young initiates, and safeguarding sacred knowledge. Their presence reveals how women, through spiritual leadership, influenced both personal destinies and the political landscape of the ancient world.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Holistic Thinking

The Pythia, as the oracle of Apollo, embodied a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of human affairs, the divine, and the natural world, offering guidance that considered the broader context of each situation.

### Intuition

As a conduit for Apollo's will, the Pythia relied heavily on her intuition to interpret cryptic visions and deliver prophecies that were deeply meaningful to both individuals and the state.

### Cyclicity

Her role, tied to the rhythms of nature and the moon, reflected the cyclical nature of prophecy, where insights would come in phases and often align with broader societal and personal transitions.

### Vision for the Future

The Pythia's prophecies were often forward-looking, providing insights that helped guide individuals and the Greek city-states in making decisions that would shape their futures. Her foresight was instrumental in strategic planning, both politically and personally.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Gave women an influential role in religious and political matters.
- Allowed women to attain high social status through religious authority.
- Reinforced the spiritual leadership of women in Ancient Greek society.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Demonstrated women's critical role in ancient spiritual life.
- Showed that women could hold positions of great authority and power.
- Highlighted the connection between spirituality and female leadership

## RESOURCE

- [Women of the Gods: The Status of Priestesses in Ancient Greece](#)
- Dillon, M. (2002). Women in Ancient Greece

YUGOSLAVIA

# Partizanke

## CARRIERS OF RESISTANCE, CARE AND COLLECTIVE SURVIVAL

During World War II, thousands of women across Yugoslavia joined the Partisan resistance, transforming both the war effort and the meaning of womanhood. They fought, healed, taught, organized, and dreamed, embodying courage that was both militant and maternal. Living in forests and ruins, they created communities based on trust, equality, and survival. Their shared leadership and unwavering care turned struggle into solidarity and war into regeneration.

Today, their legacy endures as a model of feminine resilience and collective empowerment — showing that courage is shared work and that care can be a form of resistance. Partisan women remind us that communities survive through teaching, feeding, organizing, and rebuilding. Reclaiming their stories strengthens our understanding of care, justice, and solidarity as intertwined forces that continue to inspire women today.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resistance

Partisan women resisted fascism, occupation, and the gender limits of their time — redefining power as courage in action and compassion under fire.

### Resilience

Enduring hunger, fear, and loss, Partisan women embodied emotional and physical strength rooted in hope, solidarity, and unwavering persistence.

### Care and Nurturing

Amid chaos, they tended wounds, shared food, and protected one another — proving that care is revolutionary work, not something secondary.

### Horizontal Leadership

They led collectively, shared decisions, and rotated tasks — showing that cooperation can sustain both life and liberation.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Strengthens self-confidence and collective agency through real examples of women-led action.
- Fosters solidarity and mutual support rooted in trust and shared purpose.
- Expands the definition of leadership to include care, empathy, and adaptability.
- Inspires civic engagement and courage to rebuild communities in times of crisis.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Partisan women unite resistance and care as inseparable forces of change.
- Their legacy affirms that leadership can be collective, relational, and regenerative.
- Remembering them restores a lineage of feminine courage rooted in solidarity and vision.

## RESOURCE

- [Their dangerous legacy in the post-Yugoslav space](#)
- [Yugoslav female partisans in World War II](#)

GREECE

# The Mothers of the Greek Revolution

Women played an essential role in the Greek War of Independence (1821), serving as fighters, spies, funders, and strategic supporters. Beyond managing food, supplies, and medical care, many stepped directly onto the battlefield.

Laskarina Bouboulina commanded her own fleet and financed naval campaigns; Manto Mavrogenous used her fortune to arm troops and organized European support; Domna Visvizi captained her ship after her husband's death, continuing the struggle with her son by her side.

Equally vital were the countless unnamed women who smuggled weapons, carried secret messages, sheltered fighters, and kept families and villages alive under Ottoman retaliation. Some fought disguised as men; others defended their homes in last-stand acts of courage. Their contributions were rarely recorded, yet they shaped the revolution's outcome. The women of 1821 embodied resilience, sacrifice, and bold leadership, proving that Greece's fight for freedom was carried not only by its men, but by its fearless, determined women.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resistance

They actively resisted oppression, taking up arms and challenging gender expectations.

### Vision for the future

These women fought for a vision of a free and independent Greece, hoping to secure a better future for themselves and their children.

### Resilience

The mothers and women of the revolution demonstrated extraordinary resilience, often taking on dangerous and physically demanding roles.

### Adaptability

Women adapted traditional domestic roles to contribute to the war effort in innovative ways, from smuggling supplies to serving in combat.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Provided women with a sense of agency and purpose in the political and military sphere.
- Reinforced the importance of women's contributions to national and cultural movements.
- Inspired future generations of women to engage in political and social activism.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Women were pivotal in the success of the Greek War of Independence.
- Female participation in revolutionary movements can redefine gender roles in society.
- The fight for independence highlighted the strength, resilience, and leadership of women.

## RESOURCE

[Unsung Heroines of the 1821 Greek Revolution: Women Who Shaped a Nation's Fight for Freedom](#)

📍 ITALY - SARDINIA

# Accabadora

## THE GUARDIAN OF THE FINAL PASSAGE

The Accabadora was a traditional figure in rural Sardinia, known as a woman who would assist the dying in their final moments, often in cases of severe suffering or terminal illness.

She symbolized a deep act of community care, bridging the threshold between life and death with dignity, silence, and compassion.

Though no longer practiced, her role reflects ancient knowledge about the cycles of life and the responsibility of women in caring for others, even in liminal spaces.

The Accabadora did not charge for his services, as receiving payment for ending a person's life was considered contrary to religious and moral principles



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

Her presence affirms death as part of the natural cycle of life.

### Empathy

She empathised with the suffering of the patient and his family, doing something in secret, without revealing her identity (which was known in the village, but not talked about). She did it without public recognition, just because it was necessary, integrating death into her life as well.

### Care and Nurturing

With his act, he took care of the suffering of the sick person, putting an end to it, but she also alleviated the suffering and difficulties of the family. In the humble agro-pastoral culture, having a person to feed and look after, who could not work, meant a loss of resources and energy, thus jeopardising the subsistence of the family and the community.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of women's historical roles in ethical decision-making and community care.
- Strengthening of women's identity as bearers of wisdom and guardians of human dignity.
- Inspiration for contemporary roles in holistic health, community healing, and palliative care.
- Guardian and giver of life and death
- Precursor of euthanasia, a right that is still debated and not guaranteed everywhere

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Accabbadora embodies deep, ancestral care rooted in community trust.
- Her legacy encourages acceptance of life's natural cycles, including death
- She represents the transformative feminine power in silence, presence, and regeneration.

## RESOURCE

[Accabbadora: between Sardinian history and myth](#)

📍 SARDINIA, ITALY

# Videmortos

## WOMEN WHO SAW AND SPOKE WITH THE DEAD

Is videmortos were women believed to possess the gift of seeing and communicating with the dead. Known as "those who see the dead", they acted as intermediaries between the living and the spirits, especially in rural areas such as Barbagia. These women, also called ispiridadas ("possessed"), could receive messages from the souls of the deceased and often revealed to the living the time of their death (corfare in Sardinian).

Their abilities were not seen as superstition but as a form of spiritual guidance and insight deeply rooted in Sardinian folk cosmology. The community consulted them during moments of grief, confusion, or uncertainty about the future. Their role combined aspects of divination, spiritual listening, and care, reflecting an ancient respect for the continuity between life and death and for the wisdom of ancestors.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Creativity

Their communication was often poetic, symbolic, and deeply personal.

### Empathy

They served as emotional and spiritual mediators, translating the needs of the dead and the fears of the living with compassion.

### Care and Nurturing

Through their messages, they supported the living in processing grief, fear, or uncertainty.

### Holistic Thinking

They operated within a worldview where the physical and spiritual realms were connected and coexistent.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of intuitive and spiritual capacities as valid forms of leadership.
- Empowerment through reconnection with ancestral female roles in ritual and healing.
- Restoration of cultural memory around women as guardians of life–death transitions.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Is videmortos were women who bridged the worlds of the living and the dead with intuitive authority.
- Their practice centered on empathy, spiritual care, and ancestral guidance.
- They offer a model of feminine power rooted in connection with the unseen

## RESOURCE

- [Link 1](#)

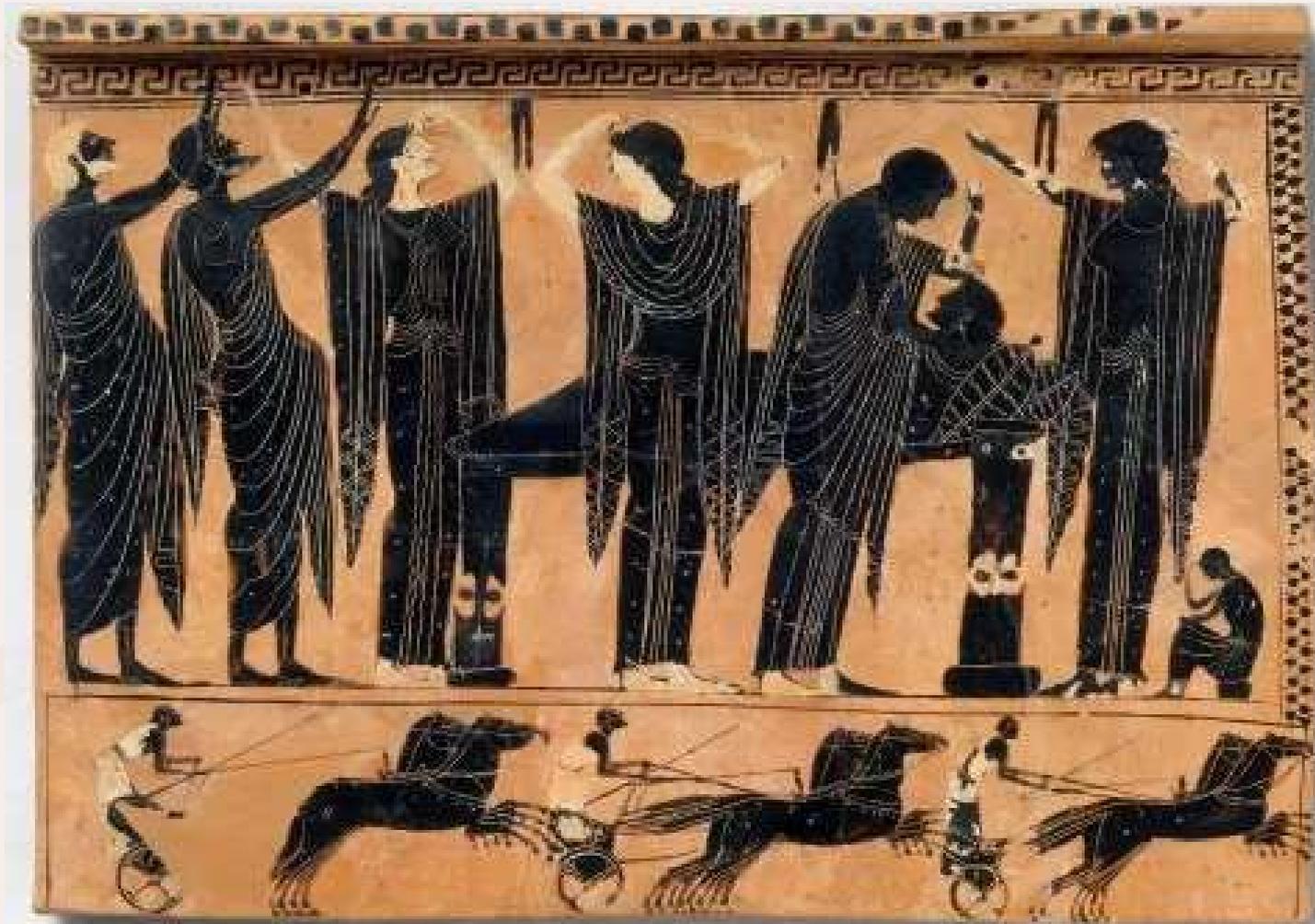
 GREECE

# Lamenting Women

## FUNERAL LAMENTERS

Lamenting women in Greece, especially in rural communities, play a central role in funerary rituals through *moiroloi*, improvised or traditional mourning songs that honor the deceased. Their chants guide the emotional flow of grief, helping families express sorrow, accept loss, and transition into communal healing. As studies on ancient Greek funeral rites show, this role has deep roots: in Archaic and Classical Greece, women were the primary caretakers of the dead.

They washed and prepared the body, led the *goos* (ritual lament), and organized the *prothesis* and *ekphora*. Their voices shaped the entire funerary experience, transforming private pain into a shared ritual. Today, lamenting women continue this lineage of emotional stewardship. Through song, presence, and ritual guidance, they preserve ancestral mourning traditions and uphold a vital form of feminine leadership rooted in care, remembrance, and the sacred work of farewell.



Terracotta funerary plaque, c.515 BCE / Metropolitan Museum of New York

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

Their participation in funerary rituals reflects the cyclical nature of life and death, reinforcing the community's connection to the inevitable cycles of nature.

### Empathy

Lamenting women offer deep emotional support, channeling empathy through their songs to help families process grief.

### Care and Nurturing

Through their role, they provide not only a voice for grief but also nurturing comfort to the mourners.

### Resilience

They show emotional resilience as they help the community cope with death and loss, providing strength to others.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Provides women with an emotional and spiritual leadership role in important community rites.
- Strengthens women's positions in family and community life, especially during crucial moments.
- Reinforces the connection between women's roles in mourning and community healing.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Women play a central role in the grieving and healing process.
- Lamenters embody resilience and empathy through their mourning rituals.
- Funerary rituals highlight the importance of women in life's transformative moments.

## RESOURCE

[Women and Funeral Rites in Archaic and Classical Greece](#)

📍 SLAVIC REGION

# Morana

## KEEPER OF ENDINGS AND SACRED TRANSFORMATION

Morana, the Slavic goddess of winter and death, embodies the wisdom of endings and the stillness that precedes renewal. Across Slavic cultures, she represents the sacred necessity of decay, rest, and release within nature's cycle. Through the well-known rituals of burning or drowning an effigy at winter's end — documented among West and East Slavs — Morana teaches that death in the natural world is not destruction, but transformation and the clearing of space for new life.

Although her name is not preserved in Serbian tradition, her themes endure in winter and early-spring customs: cleansing fires, household purification, and seasonal transitions that mark the letting-go of the old. Today, Morana's archetype invites women to honor change, grief, and stillness as vital parts of regeneration, reminding us that endings are essential to growth.



Credits: r/WitchesVsPatriarchy

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

Morana governs the turning of seasons and the natural rhythm of decay and renewal. She shows that every ending carries the seed of a new beginning — that resting, releasing, and returning are sacred phases within the cycle of life.

### Holistic Thinking

Morana weaves life and death into one continuous cycle, showing that joy, grief, decay, and renewal belong together. She brings balance through acceptance of impermanence.

### Intuition

Morana awakens inner knowing in times of transition. She guides women to feel when it is time to let go, when to rest, and when to move forward — trusting their own rhythm of change.

### Resilience

Morana's winter strength reveals endurance through hardship and darkness. Her energy supports women in meeting life's challenges with patience, courage, and trust in transformation.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Empowerment through releasing what no longer serves and embracing transformation.
- Healing grief through collective ritual and the acknowledgment of necessary endings.
- Strengthening emotional resilience by accepting life's natural cycles of decay and renewal.
- Restoring balance by valuing stillness, rest, and reflection as vital sources of power.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Morana teaches that endings are sacred pathways to renewal.
- Her wisdom helps women find strength, patience, and peace in times of transformation.
- Through her cycles, women learn to trust the rhythm of release, rest, and rebirth.

## RESOURCE

- [Morana - Slavic goddess of winter, death and misfortune in love](#)
- [Morana Slavic Goddess Of Death: Mysteries of Winter's End](#)

 SARDINIA, ITALY

# Attitadora

## WOMEN WHO SANG MOURNING SONGS

Is attitadoras were women in Sardinian tradition who performed ritual mourning through chant, accompanying the deceased and the grieving family during funeral rites. They arrived at the home once the deceased was laid out, feet facing the door, in a darkened and silent house marked by death. After a shared moment of collective weeping, they would begin to intone sos attitidos, rhythmic funeral laments that gradually grew in emotional intensity.

Each woman, in turn, would sing improvised verses praising the life and qualities of the deceased. Their chants could shift from soft lamentation to furious expression, especially in the case of violent or unjust deaths, where the attitidos could even awaken a collective desire for vengeance. These chants were accompanied by symbolic gestures: tearing clothes, pulling hair, and throwing strands onto the body in a final act of mourning and respect.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Empathy

Their chants emerged from deep emotional connection, allowing them to express and hold the grief of an entire community.

### Care and nurturing

Through their presence and ritual, they provided emotional and spiritual care to the living and the dead.

### Intuition and Creativity

Their songs were improvised and guided by inner attunement to each situation, death, and context.

### Resistance

Despite the emotional weight, they held this ritual role for generations, often facing societal and personal hardship.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Reaffirmation of women's emotional labour as vital to community cohesion.
- Empowerment through connection to ancestral ritual roles and oral traditions.
- Recognition of non-institutional female leadership rooted in voice, presence, and shared pain.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Is attitadoras guided the community through death with voice, ritual, and compassion.
- Their chants expressed both love and rage, honouring the dead and confronting injustice.
- They remind us that grief, when shared and ritualized, can be a space of collective strength and transformation.

## RESOURCE

[S'attitadora and its solemn funeral ritual](#)

📍 GREECE

# Moirai

## WEAVERS OF FATE AND KEEPERS OF LIFE'S THREAD

In ancient Greek mythology, the Moirai, or Fates, were three powerful goddesses who governed the destiny of every living being. Clotho spun the thread of life, Lachesis measured it, and Atropos cut it, determining not only each person's lifespan but also the unfolding of events that shaped the world.

As described in classical sources and later mythological interpretations, the Moirai operated beyond the authority of even Zeus, embodying an unchangeable cosmic order.

They were often portrayed as stern, wise, and unwavering, weaving the fabric of fate with absolute precision. Their presence extended from individual human lives to the destiny of gods and nations, ensuring balance in the universe. Their symbolism, weaving, measuring, cutting, reflects the profound ancient Greek belief that life follows a sacred pattern, and that women, through these mythic figures, hold the power to shape and sustain the cycles of existence.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

The Moirai's work reflects the cyclical nature of life, death, and rebirth, showing how everything is part of a greater, recurring cycle.

### Intuition

The Moirai operated with an inherent wisdom and deep understanding of human nature, with each sister knowing when and how to act based on the greater cosmic order.

### Holistic Thinking

The Moirai embodied a complete view of life, encompassing birth, life, and death, and representing the interconnectedness of all experiences and events.

### Vision for the Future

By determining the length of life and individual destinies, the Moirai controlled the future, symbolizing foresight and the inevitability of fate.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Empowerment through the awareness of agency and participation in life's unfolding.
- Strengthened resilience and acceptance of change and uncertainty.
- Connection to the larger cycles of creation, transformation, and completion.
- Reclaiming the feminine power of weaving, both literally and symbolically, as a sacred, creative act.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Moirai reveal women as architects of destiny, shaping life's flow through wisdom and will.
- Their myth teaches resilience and acceptance within the cycles of creation and transformation.
- As weavers of fate, they symbolize the enduring feminine power to create, sustain, and conclude with purpose

## RESOURCE

- [The Moirai in Greek mythology](#).
- McLeod, S. (2003). The Moirai: Fate and Power in Ancient Greek Mythology.

 SLOVENIA

# Nikrmana

## THE GREAT MOTHER OF THE ANCIENT BELIEVERS

Nikrmana (also referred to as Velika Mat' or Velika Baba – »the Great Mother« or »the Great Crone«) herself didn't have a fixed image for the old-believers, rather she appeared differently to different people who saw her be it in the thunder strikes at night or through observing the clouds in the sky. Some saw her in the shape of a woman, to others she appeared in the form of a horse, a bull, a snake or a capricorn.

Nikrmana is known amongst western Slovenians as a primal force that has created everything we know.



AI generated

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Cyclicity

In the nature everything cycles, changes shapes and transforms

### Vision for the future

It is always changing but staying present and thriving

### Resilience

She is deterrment, creative and present despite all the changes

### Regeneration

She is in the forms of nature and powerful presence that we often forget its power of ongoing life end evolvement

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Accepting and embracing the feminine power of creation and life force
- Understanding on the power we held as women
- Supports in embodying the life force we have at our disposal

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- She reminds us of the creative power that women embody
- Feminine comes in different forms, shapes and times
- She represents acceptance, nonjudgement and transformation that everyone is capable

## RESOURCE

[The Old Believers of Slovenia](#)

📍 ITALY

# Masche

## THE WISE WOMEN AND WITCHES OF PIEDMONT

The Masche are female figures from Piedmontese popular tradition, remembered as witches but also healers, wise women, midwives, and custodians of nature-based knowledge. They lived on the margins of villages, often in isolated houses, and were believed to be capable of both healing and harm, transformation, invisibility, and flight. Though often feared, they were also respected for their connection with nature, plants, and spiritual forces. In oral tradition, the Masche occupy a space between magic and medicine, myth and reality.

While they were sometimes demonized as figures allied with the devil, they were more often women who possessed deep knowledge of herbs, cycles, and protective rituals. Their memory still lives on in local toponyms, legends, and cultural imagination across rural Piedmont.



Credits: [cristinabertolino.it](http://cristinabertolino.it)

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Intuition

Their practices were based on deep instinct, spiritual perception, and non-verbal knowledge.

### Care and Nurturing

Many Masche were midwives, healers, and guardians of the vulnerable.

### Resilience

Despite being feared and often isolated, they continued to serve and support rural communities across generations.

### Regeneration

They used plants, rituals, and symbolic acts to restore balance and well-being.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of ancestral female knowledge as valid and powerful.
- Reconnection with spiritual and ecological wisdom through local tradition.
- Inspiration for women to hold space for healing, protection, and intuitive leadership.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Le Masche are female figures of strength, intuition, and healing rooted in rural life.
- Their wisdom challenges dominant narratives of fear and exclusion.
- They offer a model of feminine resistance, regeneration, and ecological connection

## RESOURCE

[The witches of Piedmont: tales of magic involving witches and demons](#)

📍 ITALY

# Fantine

## THE SPINNING FAIRIES OF VAL PELLICE

In the folklore of the Waldensian valleys of Piedmont, especially Val Pellice, the fantine are mythical female beings similar to fairies, yet far more grounded and industrious — a reflection of the resilient mountain women who inspired them. One of the most famous legends tells of a fantina who appears once a year, often on the eve of Saint John, atop the “Roccha Filera” (the Spinning Rock). There, under the moonlight, she spins a long, luminous white wool thread. According to tradition, anyone who manages to touch this magical thread receives good fortune, protection,

and prosperity. As recounted in local storytelling traditions and contemporary retellings, the fantina embodies both mystery and labor, blending the supernatural with the everyday work of spinning, a symbol deeply rooted in women’s ancestral crafts and seasonal cycles.

These legends, preserved in oral tradition and highlighted in modern interpretations, celebrate the fantine as protectors of the valleys and carriers of feminine wisdom woven into the landscape.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Ciclicity

Their spinning represents the natural rhythms of time and life, and their presence is linked to seasonal rituals.

### Holistic Thinking

The Fantine exist at the intersection of human, natural, and spiritual worlds, connecting them through symbolic action.

### Vision for the future

Their thread is a symbol of destiny, guiding those who encounter it toward new paths and opportunities.

### Intuition

As mythical beings, they act through deep, invisible knowledge, revealing truths through subtle gestures.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Reclaiming ancestral skills and their symbolic importance.
- Valuing cyclical, intuitive, and creative aspects of traditional female roles.
- Strengthening intergenerational connection and identity in rural communities

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Fantine are spinning fairies who connect time, fate, and care through their thread.
- They embody feminine knowledge and power through simple, repetitive, yet deeply symbolic actions.
- Their story honors the invisible, cyclical, and creative labor of women.

## RESOURCE

[History carved in stone: the fairy spinning in the moonlight](#)

 GREECE

# Maenads

## ECSTATIC FEMALE FOLLOWERS OF DIONYSUS

Maenads were the female devotees of Dionysus, god of wine, ecstasy, and transformation. In mythology and ancient art, they appear as wild, free women who danced through forests, played music, and entered trance-like states that dissolved ordinary boundaries. Their ecstatic rituals, accompanied by drums, flutes, and communal movement, symbolized liberation from social constraints and a deep, instinctive communion with nature. As described in classical sources and modern interpretations, Maenads embodied divine

inspiration, emotional release, and the cyclical vitality of life. Their practices were not merely chaotic: they held spiritual significance, representing transformation, renewal, and the power of the feminine to channel both creation and destruction. According to research on their role in ancient religion, Maenads were also keepers of sacred rites, participants in Dionysian mysteries, and figures who challenged patriarchal norms by expressing autonomy, collective strength, and spiritual authority.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Ciclicity

Their rituals were tied to seasonal festivals and nature's rhythms, honoring life, death, and rebirth. This mirrors the cyclical nature of women's lives and traditional agricultural calendars in rural communities.

### Resistance

As figures who rejected social norms and patriarchal control, the Maenads represent defiance against limitations placed on women. Their wildness is a form of protest and reclamation of feminine power

### Creativity

The Maenads expressed themselves through dance, music, costume, and ritual performance. Their creative freedom celebrates the power of artistic expression as a tool for transformation and healing.

### Horizontal leadership

The Maenads acted as a collective, without hierarchy, each woman contributing equally to the ritual. This reflects shared leadership and empowerment through sisterhood and mutual support.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Reclaims the value of emotional expression and bodily wisdom.
- Encourages collective rituals and female solidarity.
- Supports women in accessing deeper self-knowledge, spiritual connection, and liberation from imposed roles

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Represents the transformative power of female collectivity and ecstatic ritual.
- Challenges societal norms with the embodied wisdom and emotional freedom of women.
- Offers a mythic role model for community-based healing, artistic expression, and spiritual empowerment.

## RESOURCE

[The Maenads: Female Followers of Dionysus and Their Significance](#)

📍 SARDINIA, ITALY

# Janas

## PRIESTESSES AND KEEPERS OF ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE

The Janas are legendary female figures rooted in the pre-Nuragic culture of Sardinia, often described as priestesses, wise women, or fairies. According to Sardinian oral tradition and archaeological interpretations, the Janas were women who lived in harmony with nature, in caves carved into rock (known as Domus de Janas, or "houses of the fairies"). They are believed to have been guardians of ancient knowledge related to healing, rituals, spinning and weaving, and the cyclical wisdom of life and death.

Their myth is shared across Mediterranean cultures, connecting them with other ancestral female figures who embodied sacred knowledge, intuitive power, and regenerative practices.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Intuition

The Janas are deeply connected to inner knowledge and symbolic understanding, often acting through non-verbal, intuitive wisdom.

### Empathy

Their role as protectors, healers and guides implies a strong emotional sensitivity and ability to care for others.

### Creativity

They are traditionally associated with weaving, crafting, and shaping their environment in harmony with natural and spiritual rhythms.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Recognition of ancestral female knowledge as a source of empowerment.
- Reconnection with creativity, intuition, and earth-based wisdom.
- Inspiration to embrace leadership roles rooted in care, ritual, and resilience

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Janas symbolize the sacred power of feminine ancestral knowledge.
- They represent a deep connection with nature, ritual, and the invisible.
- They offer a model of inner authority and community-based wisdom that is still relevant today

## RESOURCE

[THE MYSTERY OF THE JANAS Sardinians. Witches or priestesses?](#)

📍 SARDINIA, ITALY

# Janare

## THE WITCH OF CAMPANIA

The Janara is a legendary female figure from Campania, particularly associated with Benevento. Often described as a witch with magical powers, she was believed to fly at night, enter homes through the keyhole, and harm or haunt people while they slept. To protect themselves, people placed brooms near their door, knowing that the Janara, compelled to count the bristles, would be distracted until sunrise. Though feared, she is also surrounded by a sense of mystery, independence, and power.

Some sources link the Janara to ancient cults of the goddess Diana, suggesting that the figure may originate from pre-Christian female spiritual practices. The Janara thus embodies both resistance to patriarchal authority and the preservation of female power, misinterpreted and demonized over time.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Intuition

She symbolizes deep knowledge and instinctive power, often hidden or misunderstood.

### Resistance

She represents female defiance in the face of control, repression, and superstition.

### Creativity

Even in a feared form, she embodies a mythical power of transformation and mystery.

### Holistic Thinking

Her existence suggests a worldview where spiritual, natural, and symbolic elements are deeply intertwined

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Restores the narrative of women's strength and spiritual autonomy in folk traditions.
- Helps reinterpret ancestral myths as sources of empowerment, not shame.
- Encourages women to reconnect with intuitive and symbolic forms of knowledge

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Janara is a misunderstood yet powerful symbol of feminine autonomy and intuition.
- Her legacy encourages women to reclaim and reinterpret female figures erased by patriarchy.
- She represents resilience and spiritual knowledge rooted in rural traditions

## RESOURCE

[The legend of Janara, the Campania witch to be kept away.](#)

SLOVENIA

# Čarovnice or Veščice

## THE WITCHES OF THE SLIVNICA HILL

They are said to live on the Slivnica hill near Cerknica, among other places, and Valvazor wrote about them. A more common name for a witch is a witch (the term comes from the German 'zaubern' meaning to bewitch).

Their most common job is to bewitch livestock. Cows are left without milk, pigs get sick and they can even make men lose their sexual power! They take the milk from the cows by milking it with a rope or simply with a tree branch. From there, the milk of the robbed cow flows. In addition to

stealing milk, they also cause harm by burying eggs or some other enchanted thing under the barn threshold. This can cause all the livestock in the barn to get sick. They can also destroy the crop with hail or drought. They have the power to fly through the air and thus attract black clouds. However, not all of them are aimed at people. Some also tell fortunes (slogajo) or help people in other ways. They do this with the help of their books, which are read from the back.



Čarovnica na sliki [Johna Williama Waterhousa](#) (olje na platnu, 1886)

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Resilience

Symbolism of distancing from “normal” to be able existing in their power and abilities

### Resistance

Women with great power were like to be marked as evil and dangerous but on the other side were having outstanding powers

### Creativity

Is shown in their deeds when they took revenge

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Women capacity of being connected with greater wisdom and knowledge
- Ability to contain her power and wisdom in big potency into negative (disruptive) or positive (contributive) purposes

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Women wisdom is much more powerful than we are willing to accept as a society
- Women wisdom is directing the path where we can/choosing to go as humanity
- Human duality is as natural as day and light in the nature

## RESOURCE

Demonology.

 SARDINIA, ITALY

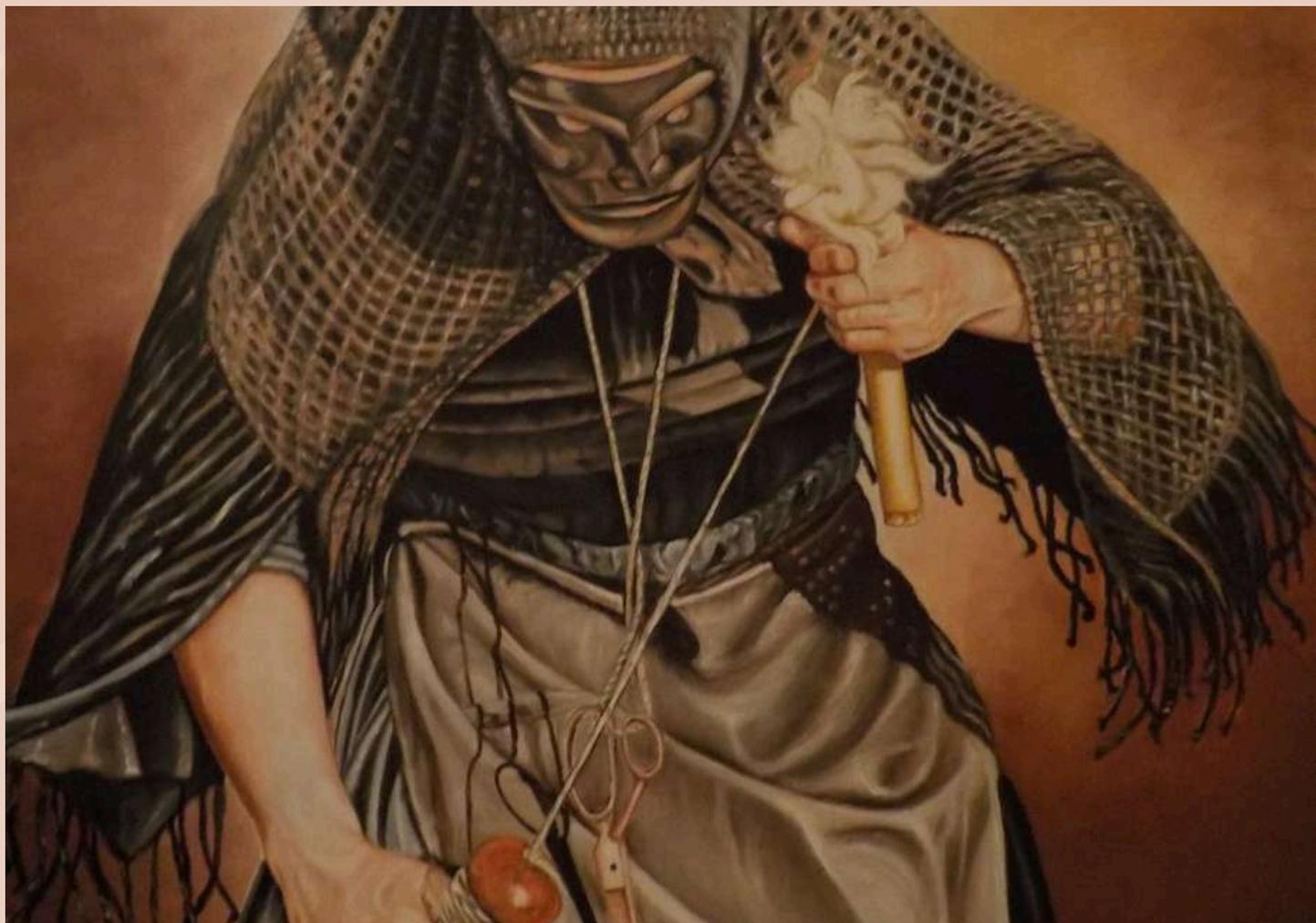
# Maria Filonzana

THE SARDINIAN FATE WHO SPINS THE THREAD OF LIFE

Maria Filonzana is a mythological and ritual figure in Sardinia, comparable to the Moirai or Parcae of Greco-Roman tradition. Her name means “Mary who spins” and she is represented holding a spindle and thread, symbols of life, fate, and feminine power. Her role evokes the image of the weaver of destinies: to spin is to create, and to cut the thread is to end a life.

In Sardinian carnival traditions Maria Filonzana appears as a feared character, often performed by a man dressed as a dishevelled woman who

threatens to cut someone’s life thread. In other contexts, she appears in solstice rites or religious festivities, sometimes honoured and sometimes demonised, reflecting an ambivalent image: part mother, part witch, part death-bringer, part divine. In some villages, her effigy is burned during collective rituals, echoing both purification and memory of historical persecutions against women (such as witch hunts under Spanish rule). Symbolically, Maria Filonzana is a bridge between worlds.



Credits: Leonardo Loretto

## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Ciclicity

Her presence in solstice and carnival rituals reflects the cycles of life, death, and seasonal renewal.

### Intuition

As a symbolic weaver of fate, her power is not rational but deeply spiritual and archetypal.

### Holistic Thinking

She embodies the connection between life and death, visible and invisible, individual and collective.

### Vision for the future

The thread she holds speaks to the unfolding of life's path, and the awareness of its end.

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- Restoration of symbolic female authority over life cycles and fate.
- Empowerment through connection with ancient symbols of creativity, transformation, and resilience.
- Reinterpretation of marginalised female figures as carriers of deep cultural memory

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Maria Filonzana is a symbolic weaver of life and fate, rooted in European and Sardinian mythology.
- She embodies feminine creative and spiritual authority in life–death cycles.
- Her dual nature, nurturing and feared, reflects the complexity and power of ancestral feminine figures

## RESOURCE

[Sa Filonzana, the story of the only female Sardinian mask](#)

SLOVENIA

# Rojenice / Sojenice

## THE SPINNERS OF FATE

The Sojenice are ancient Slavic fairy beings, three women who visit newborns to determine their fate. Appearing at midnight, often through the chimney, they whisper the threads of destiny into the child's forehead: one speaks of youth, the second of life's journey, and the third of death and transformation. Their presence reflects the Slavic understanding of life as a woven continuum, guided by mystery, balance, and inevitability.

Offerings of bread, wine, and salt were made to invite their blessing and ensure a prosperous path. Today, the Sojenice remind women of their power to shape life through intention, ritual, and the weaving of unseen forces.



## FEMININE QUALITIES

### Care and Nurturing

Care and nurturing: is awarded when present and valuable resource for abundant life

### Ciclicity

life has start, different stages and aspects that exchange in life, and death

### Vision for the future

They predict it and can also be changed by the good intention and deeds

## THE POWER IT HOLDS

- They remind on the personal individual power of decision and choosing the faith in life
- Reminding about the importance of all life stages and all having their value

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Kindness is valuable and cherished
- We all can influence our faith with own decisions
- Visible world has in parallel its energy side

## RESOURCE

[Sojenice, Rojenice](#)



# EmpowHer

PERMACULTURE

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