



## LES TRÉSORS DE PERSÉE - UNE VIRGINITÉ SANS HYMEN : LE CORPS FÉMININ EN GRÈCE ANCIENNE

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***La Vie des Classiques est allée à la pêche dans les trésors de Persée et vous offre un magnifique article de Giulia Sissa sur le corps féminin en Grèce ancienne.***

RÉSUMÉ : Although the word hymen is Greek in origin, feminine virginity in Ancient Greece was not identified with a thin membrane. The doctors of the classical period Aristotle and Galen weren't aware of its existence, while Soranos, a practitioner who wrote in Greek but who taught in Rome, explicitly negated its physiological existence. For him the membrane which in some cases obstructed the sexual organ of young girls was nothing but an abnormality, a tissue that was to be excised. But above and beyond the existence of the hymen, sexual integrity in women was nonetheless considered an important standard of behavior, as can be seen in one of Solon's laws and from a number of historical and mythical accounts concerning the seduction of young unmarried girls and the punishment they deserved. For the Greeks, virginity without the hymen, was not as much a question of social status (the absence of marriage), as a particular physical representation of the body both closed and intact.

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