

HRVATSKI STUDIJI

ODJEL ZA FILOZOFIJU



**CONSTRUCTING THE PHYSICAL SELF IN ANCIENT
GREECE: COMPLEXION, IDENTITY AND LIFE**
PROF. DR. MARIA MICHELA SASSI (UNIVERSITY OF PISA)
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ABSTRACT

Natural complexion is a major element of distinction of human bodies, and thus it is obvious that skin colour distinction has been instrumental in any culture to the construction of identity, individual or collective. However, the manners of this construction are changing through different spaces and times, as they depend, on the one hand, on the specific rules of the social game, and, on the other hand, on the extent to which the body is perceived as part of the individual self. I will try to show how, in the Greek experience, as reflected in crucial areas of (mainly Classical) art and thought, not only the differences in complexion would offer a primary principle of distinction among individuals, but the color of the body as such was significantly associated to its having *life*.

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