

**Hajdarević, S. (2023) “Aristaenetus’ Collection: ‘Male’ and ‘Female’ Letters”, *Systasis* 41, 1–19.**

The collection entitled *Erotic Letters*, attributed to Aristaenetus, was probably written in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. In concordance with the title of the Collection, the theme of all its 50 letters is erotica: the relationships between men and women of various statuses (maidens, married women, widows, slaves and *hetairai*) are depicted. Since the senders, addressees and protagonists in the Collection are both male and female, it is important to investigate if the choice of the sex of the correspondents of any given letter impacts the a) formal characteristics of the letter, b) the plot depicted and especially c) the letter’s gender construction. While some letters depict men and women behaving in an expected manner, in some the usual gender roles are severely questioned or even inverted. Therefore, I intend to scrutinise the letters and examine if any of the sexes is more likely to send letters depicting relationships that question/invert the expected gender roles, e.g. the repeated (successful) female adulteries, the oversexualised wives, the objectification of men etc. The final goal of my research is to investigate if Aristaenetus already had the particular formal characteristics, the plot and the gender construction of his letters in mind while he was choosing the correspondents’ sex or if their choice was a random one.