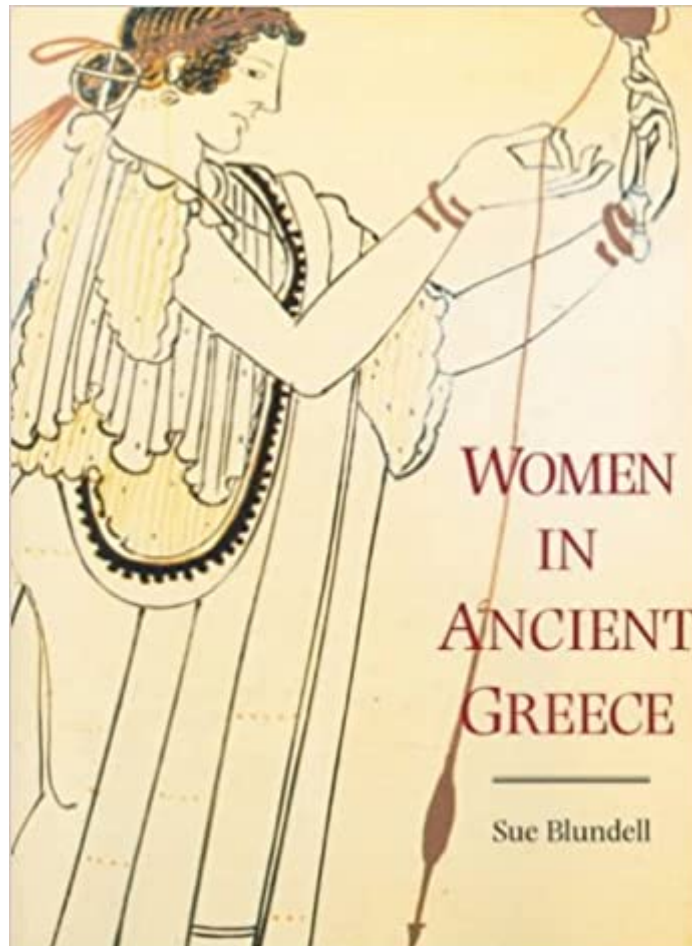




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# Women In Ancient Greece



## Synopsis

To read the history of ancient Greece as it has been written for centuries is to enter a thoroughly male world. This book, a comprehensive history of women in the Archaic and Classical Ages, completes our picture of ancient Greek society. Largely excluded from any public role, the women of ancient Greece nonetheless appear in various guises in the art and writing of the period, and in legal documents. These representations, in Sue Blundell's analysis, reveal a great deal about women's day-to-day experience as well as their legal and economic position--and how they were regarded by men. Here are women as portrayed in Homer, in Greek lyric poetry, and by the playwrights; the female nature as depicted in medical writings and by Aristotle; representations of women in sculpture and vase paintings. This is evidence filtered through a male view: Sappho is the only female writer of antiquity much of whose work survives. Yet these sources and others such as regulations and law court speeches reveal a great deal about women's lives and about their status as defined by law and by custom. By examining the roles that men assigned to women, the ideals they constructed for them, and the anxieties they expressed about them, Blundell sheds light on the cultural dynamics of a male-dominated society. Lively and richly illustrated, her work offers a fresh look at women in the ancient world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In her introduction to *Women in Ancient Greece* Sue Blundell notes how few overviews have appeared among the plethora of books and articles on women's lives and representations in the ancient Greek world...Her book is an admirable response to the need for such an overview. In a

concise narrative account incorporating much of the recent scholarly work, Blundell offers a broad survey of the most relevant topics for the study of women in Greece during the period 750-336 B.C....Blundell's narrative is seldom merely descriptive; rather, throughout her exposition, she guides her readers to recognize the ways ancient representations and institutions associated with the female are a production of male issues, concern and power. --R.J. Schork (New England Classical Journal)Blundell offers here an excellent, brief survey of women in archaic and classical Greek art, literature, and history. It is the sole comprehensive account in English of women in ancient Greece (as opposed to Greece and Rome). Blundell's reading is wide, her thought judicious, her prose clear, and her insight penetrating. She has a good bibliography, decent notes, and well-chosen illustrations...Recommended for all college and university libraries. --J.M. Williams (Choice)

Sue Blundell is a Lecturer for both Birkbeck and Goldsmiths Colleges in the University of London as well as for the Open University. She is the author of *The Origins of Civilization in Greek and Roman Thought*.

The question of the status of women in ancient Greece is of more than purely scholarly interest. It has some contemporary political relevance. Feminists and neo-conservatives both point at the ancient world for examples of doing what comes naturally. Their theory is that if certain patterns of human behavior have persisted a long time then they are due to nature not nurture. Blundell's survey is thorough, but largely based on well-known literary sources. In general she finds that repression was usual, especially in classical Athens, and women had little in the way of rights or independence. Connelly's recent book "Portrait of a Priestess" points to the important role of females in Greek religion and gives a somewhat different view. Although the title refers in to "ancient" Greece it, only covers the archaic and classical periods and stops at the death of Alexander. Hellenistic Greece is dealt with in a three page postscript, which is, in many ways, the most interesting and original part, because she suggests that this was an age of relative emancipation. Works such as the "Leucippe and Clitophon" of Achilles Tatius suggest that brother sister (or at least half-brother to half-sister) marriage became common. It would be interesting to learn how (or whether) this came about. The women of the New Testament are not mentioned at all. It would have been interesting to have her views on Lydia of Thyatira, in the 16th chapter of Acts, the dealer in purple cloth, who made her whole staff convert with her, and insisted on Paul and Timothy staying in her house.Perhaps Blundell has a second book in mind.

Great condition! Much better than I expected for the price! Thank you!

Good book for the reading

I used this book for a study abroad trip to Greece and it was excellent. I found the book not only interesting, but informative. I really got an understanding of the status of women in ancient Greece. The author has covered a lot of information in this book and has done it in a very readable and enjoyable way. I highly recommend it. I still pick it up occasionally and read a chapter here and there. I can't say enough good things about it. It would be great to use in the classroom or to read on one's own. Wonderful book! 5 stars!

The information is good. I have not read every word but have read the parts I was most interested in. I am glad to see someone write on this subject!

It worked well enough for my paper.

I have to disagree with another reviewer. I am definitely NOT "PC", so I read this book with a careful eye towards bias. I must have some myself, because I was pleasantly surprised at how absolutely objective the writing was (I was half expecting some feminist's agenda-mongering cloaked as "history", but found in fact history written more objectively and lively than many male historians'). Ms. Blundell never writes to purposefully bash the male-centric culture of ancient Athens, just recounts embarrassing truths. If someone is offended by what she had to say, perhaps they were reading her words with a biased eye, or simply wanted to ignore the truth. I mean, if you open your eyes to a different viewpoint, you can see where some radical feminist might take offense also, for she just tells it like it is for the sake of completeness (as a historian should), with no axe to grind. I ordered her book to learn about women's life in ancient Greece for a book I'm writing, but again, was pleasantly surprised to find some information on the multifaceted nature of the Greek Gods that one doesn't see in the typical books about myths as well as very specific information on the state of medicine in classical times that is hard to find anywhere. This, and references to several Greek poets made this book unexpectedly interesting, more so than I would have thought just from the title. Highly recommended, this is one of the best researched and most clinical books on ancient Greece I have read yet, not to mention necessary. After all, it's about how the other half lived.

This is a very insightful overview of women in ancient Greece. It's a good companion to Sarah Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. Pomeroy's book is a pioneering work in women's historicity, while Blundell expounds on some of the themes. Blundell spends just one chapter on the women of Sparta. This is understandable, but Spartan women are a marked distinction to women from elsewhere in Greece, due to the fact that they enjoyed so many more rights & privileges than women from other city states. For a more extensive study of the women of Lacedamon, I would recommend *Spartan Women*. I have been working on my own commentary on the ancient Greeks, and I found this book very informative and useful in researching my sections on Grecian women. Blundell is certainly erudite and is able to discern a great many plausible details of the lives & times of Greek women from the most generic of evidence. This book is indispensable for all persons interested in feminist topics.

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