



Daughters of Gaia: Women in the Ancient Mediterranean World

Bella Vivante

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The experiences of women in ancient cultures were certainly very difficult from those of most women today. Yet a tendency to focus too much on the restrictions early Western women faced has until now provided readers with an incomplete picture. In *Daughters of Gaia*, Bella Vivante explores women's lives in four ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean: Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome. Looking at this era with a women-centered perspective, Vivante highlights women's agency and explains the social, political, and cultural factors that fostered female empowerment. Beginning with powerful images of goddesses and women's roles in the religious sphere, Vivante lays the foundation for women's activities in other social realms--Health, economics, governance, war, philosophy, and poetry. By examining the similarities and differences among the four Mediterranean civilizations, she offers a deeper understanding of the lives of women in each. Drawing on her extended contact with Native American peoples and her knowledge of Native concepts of women's identities, Vivante applies new models for viewing women's roles in the ancient world.

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