
This is the latest addition to an extensive series of works published by Bristol Classical Press, the stated aim of which is 'to explore the culture and achievement of the civilisations of Greece and Rome'. The series endeavours to provide concise introductory material on a range of topics, suitable for the use of both secondary students and those new to the ancient world at tertiary level. Past publications have covered subjects as diverse as Roman religious behaviour and slavery in the Greek world. This latest contribution fits comfortably into the established pattern: Blundell takes her readers on a brisk, yet comprehensive, tour of the world inhabited by Athenian women in the fifth and fourth centuries, exploring most aspects of their lives.

The first chapter begins with some general observations concerning the political and economic position of Athens during the classical period. This is followed by an examination of the types of women who appear in the decoration of that great symbol of classical Athens, the Parthenon. The pediments, metopes and friezes of this building display female figures who may be identified as mortal women, married and unmarried, mythic heroines or goddesses by their dress, demeanour and behaviour. Blundell uses these categories as the basis of her exploration of Athenian women's lives. Succeeding chapters focus not only on the conventional topics of unmarried women and married women, but also on the portrayal of female deities and mythological women popular at Athens. These in turn are followed by a very brief section concerned with those who do not appear on the Parthenon—slaves, hetairai and metics.

The use of the Parthenon decoration as a jumping-off point is both apposite and refreshing. It is a suitable precursor to the ensuing categorisation of Athenian women, reminding us that the various divisions used are not simply convenient academic constructs, but reflect the way in which Athenian society itself labelled women. Working within these categories Blundell discusses all the usual aspects of women's lives from marriage, child rearing and birth control to education, household management and religious participation. The portrayal of goddesses and women from myth is examined mainly in the context of their position as role-models, positive and negative, for Athenian women.
The various chapters are clearly laid out, with frequent sub-headings to indicate even minor changes in topic. These can be a little annoying, since they break up the flow of the text. In their favour, however, it has to be said they make it much easier to check up on specific topics in isolation. The use of direct quotations from a wide variety of Greek authors is most welcome, as are the occasional black and white photographic illustrations. The heavily abbreviated names and titles common in academic texts, which often baffle students new to the field, have been eschewed in favour of full references. Secondary students will find this work as easy to use as their tertiary counterparts. The book lacks a bibliography as such, but does contain a short list of 'suggested further reading', which mentions most of the major studies in this field published in the last decade.

Blundell has not pushed back any boundaries with this latest work. She follows orthodox lines of thought and does not venture beyond them. Even minor points of controversy are labelled as such and the matter left open to discussion; major points of controversy are adroitly avoided. It must be remembered, however, that the pursuit of cutting edge research is not the purpose of the series to which this work belongs. Instead, *Women in Classical Athens* fulfils its limited objectives in an enthusiastic and readable manner. True, it cannot be regarded as anything more than a basic introduction to the subject, but it is likely to remain useful to most students as a reference volume, long after their initial perusal.

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