



# Women's Roles in Ancient Civilizations: A Reference Guide

*Bella Vivante*

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Knowledge about the roles of women in ancient civilizations has been limited to traditionally held notions, but recent discoveries and research have led to exciting insights into the great variety of ways in which women contributed to ancient cultures. This reference work, designed for student research, features lengthy essays and a wealth of new information about women's roles in twelve ancient civilizations around the world?China, India, Japan, Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt, West Africa, Greece, Rome, the Maya, the Inca, and Native North America.

Historical studies have tended to ignore women's roles in ancient civilizations and to devalue their contributions to the community. These essays examine women's religious, political, public, economic, and domestic roles, their legal status, creative expression in art and literature, and notions of beauty. Students can then compare women's roles across cultures. The contributors, each of whom is a subject specialist, examine not only the nature of women's limitations in patriarchal culture but the ways in which women often succeeded, despite these limitations, in becoming agents of social change. Each essay begins with a timeline of events in the history of that culture to place the narrative in historical context, and concludes with suggestions for further reading about women in that culture.

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