

Women Civilization artworks in Ancient Greece and the Roman Era

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Civilization is the most appropriate term when discussing the entirety of human history; the gradual rise of women's role in society dates back to ancient times; it is the thread that holds human history together as it developed over time in various cultures. This essay aims to contrast and compare women's roles using artwork in two different civilizations in the same prehistoric Era: ancient Greece and the Roman period. This paper will present women's activities, roles, privileges, and status approach in the two cultures. To give a comprehensive understanding of whether or not women were revered in both civilizations and their value in their specific cultures.

According to Lee (2015), in ancient Greece, women were accorded a lower level of legal protection than their male counterparts. Women were not intended to be able to possess property, inherit property, or participate in democratic rights. Nor were they expected to inherit property. During this period, women's primary responsibilities were to care for their families and raise their children regardless of their wealth or family background. However, the Greece women were divided into Sparta and Athens, which made a difference in women's treatment; the Sparta women were accorded some privileges compared to Athens women. On the other hand, women in the Roman Era were treated according to their family status; the women from wealthy families in Roman Era were regarded as exceptional and were accorded a different level of respect than women in ancient Greece culture (Lee, 2015). These women, for instance, were granted the right to engage in various activities similar to that of men, own land, and take part in a variety of other recreational activities, including appearing in events and drinking wine. In ancient Rome, women enjoyed the same legal rights as men but were not permitted to participate in political life. Women in Roman society were allowed to participate in a greater variety of activities than their counterparts in Greece society; however, they were limited to certain roles in which men maintained dominance over them rather than allowing them to break free from the constraints of

their culture. Women from ancient Greece and the Roman Era shared the same roles of taking care of the household, except for women from wealthy families and Sparta, who had different privileges.

Spartan women received a formal education, which prepared them to participate as contributing members of society and equipped them with the necessary tools. Even though they received their formal education at home, it was essential for them to be prepared to become the mothers of Spartan troops (Martin, 2013). In ancient Sparta, women assumed the head of the household because husbands, sons, and other male family members were expected to serve in the military. Similarly, women in Sparta were not restricted in their ability to possess property. They were granted ownership of more than a third of the land, which they were free to distribute to their sons, daughters, and brothers as they saw fit (Martin, 2013). The women of Sparta had a voice in matters about the economy and could engage in building the economy, as shown in the diagram below.

Fig 1: Sparta Women working artwork.



(Scott, 2009).

On the other hand, males thought of the women of Athens as their property and treated them as enslaved people. Women were not allowed to speak or be seen in public, which severely hampered their ability to exercise their rights. The majority of them devote seventy-five percent of their lives to tending to other housework responsibilities and preparing meals for their spouses (Martin, 2013). When a lady went outside, a man was required to accompany her and watch after her. Education was a rare option for Athenian women, and those who took advantage of it did so in the privacy of their own houses because of the social stigma attached to the pursuit. They had no legal standing to participate in political activities because their sole responsibility was to have children and give birth (Scott, 2009). Since girls were not permitted to inherit the land, the property of their fathers or husbands was to be taken by the male relative who was the closest in age to them. After a significant religious ceremony, the deceased were to be taken care of by the relative who had inherited the land. The Athenian women engaged in household chores and were depicted in some of their artworks below.

Fig 2: Athens women fetching water artwork



(Scott, 2009)

Wealthy women in Roman Era were regarded as citizens but were not allowed to vote (Bunson, 2014). This was the case even though they were considered citizens. Roman historians do not make frequent references to women for the simple reason that, in comparison to men, they did not take part in as many different types of public events. Women in Roman society had the same responsibilities as their counterparts in ancient Greek culture: they were expected to care for the home, the children, and the elderly family members. In the area of inheritance, the Romans were distinguished from other cultures because both females and males enjoyed equal rights of inheritance. The divorce was valid for both parties, but custody of the children was awarded to the father or another male relative who was very close. Roman women did not have a voice in public affairs and were not allowed to vote in any legislative assembly. This was the norm for Roman women. The women who had politically influential partners in the government, on the other hand, may have been able to exert some influence in political matters. The women from wealthy families had the privilege of having servants, as shown in one of their artwork.

Fig 3: Roman woman with servants' artwork



(Cartwright, 2014).

Prostitution was widely accepted in ancient Greece society, which was characterized by a high degree of openness (Martin, 2013). Pornai was used in ancient Greece to refer to anyone who worked in sexual services, including those who advertised their services on the street and those who worked in brothels. The Athens and Sparta cultures had distinct social classes, including the prostitute. Beautiful women with a rudimentary education often worked as prostitutes, particularly courtesans who catered to wealthy clients (Martin, 2013). The majority of women in Greek society were affected by prostitution because it resulted in the birth of many children, none of whom were eligible for citizenship. On the other hand, women in Roman Era were permitted to earn a living through prostitution; nevertheless, not all women had the freedom to choose whether or not to engage in this activity. In the setting of slavery, rape was not considered a crime, but one was responsible for paying restitution for damaged property (Garnsey and Saller, 2014). On the other hand, in ancient Rome and Greece, prostitution was considered acceptable, and slave women had little choice but to engage in the sexual activity regardless of whether or not they wanted to.

Conclusion

There are various instances in which the two ancient cultures were comparable such as the household roles and giving birth; it is generally accepted that the way women were treated had some distinctions and similarities. Women from Sparta received special care in Greece, which differed from the standard care provided to women in Athens. Roman Era did not consider women enslaved people, although women had no voice in society. In addition, it is generally accepted that women in the two cultures are comparable to one another in a variety of respects. For example, in both societies, women were not granted the right to vote or occupy public office. Similarly, both civilizations had the understanding that the major function of women was to

procreate and take care of domestic responsibilities. Last but not least, engaging in prostitution was entirely within the bounds of the law in both ancient Greece and ancient Rome.

References

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