



Women Poets in Ancient Greece and Rome

Ellen Greene

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Although Greek society was largely male-dominated, it gave rise to a strong tradition of female authorship. Women poets of ancient Greece and Rome have long fascinated readers, even though much of their poetry survives only in fragmentary form.

This pathbreaking volume is the first collection of essays to examine virtually all surviving poetry by Greek and Roman women. It elevates the status of the poems by demonstrating their depth and artistry. Edited and with an introduction by Ellen Greene, the volume covers a broad time span, beginning with Sappho (ca. 630 b.c.e.) in archaic Greece and extending to Sulpicia (first century B.C.E.) in Augustan Rome. In their analyses, the contributors situate the female poets in an established male tradition, but they also reveal their distinctly “feminine” perspectives. Despite relying on literary convention, the female poets often defy cultural norms, speaking in their own voices and transcending their positions as objects of derision in male-authored texts. In their innovative reworkings of established forms, women poets of ancient Greece and Rome are not mere imitators but creators of a distinct and original body of work.

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