**OCR Classical Civilisation GCSE Route 2: Women in the Ancient World, by Robert Hancock-Jones (Author), Dan Menashe (Author), James Renshaw (Author). Bloomsbury ISBN 978-1-350-01503-6**

*Women in the Ancient World* is a textbook that OCR has produced as a resource to support teachers for the new GCSE (9–1) Classical Civilisation specification. This book is the second thematic study, published closely after the first thematic study: *Myth and Religion*. This textbook is an excellent opportunity for students taking civilisation courses, or undergraduate gender study students, to get acquainted with women’s studies about societies notoriously known as patriarchal cultures in which women’s voices are silent. However, this attitude is widely abandoned ever since close attention has been paid to various documents and aspects of everyday life of women in classical antiquity. Apart from a variety of literary sources, this book uses inscriptions and archaeological material in order to revive the image of women in the classical world. The presentation of the material is clear and is up to date; there are many illustrations and maps which make the context vivid.

The book is divided in two parts: (1) *Thematic Study: Women in the Ancient World*, and (2) *Culture and Literature*. The first part deals with women from mythology, i.e. legendary and famous women from the literary past, but also with anonymous women and their position in the family and in the society. Students get to know famous women from the Greek and Roman past, who made an impact on men’s lives, such as Demosthenes’ Neaira, Pericles’ Aspasia, Volumnia, Lycoris and Catullus’ Clodia/Lesbia. It is interesting to mention that in the last chapter, which is titled “Women to be Feared”, a detailed description of Medea and Cleopatra is given. The first is famous as a legendary sorceress, a barbarian amongst the Greeks, and the latter as a historical person, who is closely linked to Roman history.

In part two: *Culture and Literature* there are three subdivisions: (1) *The Homeric world*, (2) *The Roman City Life*, and (3) *War and Warfare*. This part is focused not so much on women as it is focused on culture in general. Regarding Greek culture, the focus is placed on the Homeric world, seen through the rich Mycenaean material culture and the Linear B, which is the most important evidence on this epoch. The literary evidence for the Homeric world is narrowed to the *Odyssey*, mostly because its contents are more appropriate for studying the peace-time customs. The emphasis in the chapter *Roman City Life* is on the structure of the Roman society, the Roman household and the significance of *patria potestas*, as well as on theatre and various theatrical performances, which was important part of their leisure time. The last chapter of the second part is dedicated to War and Warfare, because war was a common thing in ancient societies. Most of the sources that refer to actual wars are literary, among which Thucydides is the most relevant source on Athenian war history in the fifth century.

Overall, this book provides wide range of examples from known literary sources, as well as from archaeological and inscription material, in order to introduce this particular theme to the students with a variety of sources. However, there are multitudes of approaches to this theme, and not every aspect is taken in this textbook. However, the choice that is made is quite understandable and attractive for students even without any previous knowledge of Greek and Roman literature.

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