

# Example of book review on maria brosius' "women in ancient persia (559-331 b.c)"

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## **Book Review: “ Women in Ancient Persia (559-331 B. C)” 1996 by Maria Brosius**

Maria Brosius presents a thoughtful and visionary examination of the status and the influential role that the women played in the first Persian Empire. The author reviews the effect of the political hostility between Greece and Persia, drawing conclusions that the situation caused the eventual representation of the women in the Persian sources. According to Brosius, to understand the women, the historical development and the narrative pattern played a major role in the insight. Brosius reveals the roles that women in ancient Persia played, especially in the liberation of fellow women and in the economic development of the empire. Strategic roles for the women in Ancient Persia are identifiable in their effort in fighting for equality, taking care of families, undertaking investment opportunities, and supporting men in times of war. The paper reviews Maria Brosius book with the intention of analyzing the roles that women in ancient Persia, irrespective of the social classes, played in the historical and economic development of the empire. Maria Brosius provides an exploratory work that examines the overall role of the women in the ancient Persian Empire. The first role played by the women in Persia was the fight for economic and political equality with their male counterparts. In the ancient historical sources, women held lower positions whereas men held sensitive positions due to the belief that men are superior. However, the fight for equality draws down to the ancient Persian empire. Brosius indicates “ some women exercised considerable independence economic power and held positions of leadership” (Brosius 184). The author clearly shows that women came out strongly to oppose the

notion that only men could navigate along the leadership lines in diverse aspects of their lives. By taking up leadership positions, women demystified the myth that only the men could undertake the leadership roles in the society.

In ancient Persia, the women took an active role at helping the male counterparts, especially in times of the great struggles and war. From the start of her text, Brosius indicates her intense attitude that the royal women from the Achaemenid court and other royal arenas and textual evidence supported her belief in the help rendered by women, especially during the antagonism with Greece. The author states, “ decline of the Achaemenian Empire could be attributed to the often influence of the women at court still finds its modern supporters” (Brosius 176). This statement clearly indicates that the Greek opinion linked women in the ancient Persia greatly to the decline of their empire because they took a front role in the same. “ There were many female fighters surfacing among the ranks of the Sassanid army” (Brosius 176). As much as the men took a major role as well, the support from the women definitely drove their zeal to victory.

The economic development of the Persian Empire greatly relied on the efforts of women. Most women got to the position of managing the economic activities in the empire at the time when their aggressiveness rose; thus, they became a strong force in the economic activities of the empire. Brosius (188) states, “ Both noble and common women enjoyed economic independence in Persia.” Concisely, women became more powerful after their empowerment hence they took over the management of the ancient Persian Empire. After the decline of the Achaemenian Empire, the Persian

women got the chance to steer their own economy to prosperity, an opportunity that the noble women took first. Serving as the royals, the noble women undertook the initiative and got more women into employment; thus, women became equal to their male counterparts in most of the cases.

Women in ancient Persia took part in educating their people on their position in society. Initially, only men took the initiative, but Brosius notes that evidence had linked women and men alike to the role. The author states, “Whatever a man or a woman knows but inform others to perform accordingly” (Brosius 152). The women took the roles together with the men.

Brosius challenges my views about the roles that the women in ancient Persia played. Initially, I believed that women only played backyard roles like taking care of the families, in the development of the ancient Persia. However, the author draws evidence that women took roles that appear more advanced to a point that they shared the employment opportunities with the men in equal measure (Brosius 185). The author enriches my thoughts on the roles that the Persian women took in the decline of the Achaemenian Empire. I believed that women only played the supportive roles in decline and that only men participated actively. Furthermore, women provided men with supportive services that enabled men face their challengers more effectively. However, the author tactically states that even the women took active parts in the war and that Greek sources recognised ability of the Persian women in fighting. Precisely, the women in ancient Persia took frontline roles in the overall development of the empire.

## **Works Cited**

Brosius Maria“: Women in Ancient Persia”: 559–331 BC, Oxford: Clarendon Press (1996), pp 149-199: 2. 11, 37. ProQuest. Web. 3 June 2013.