

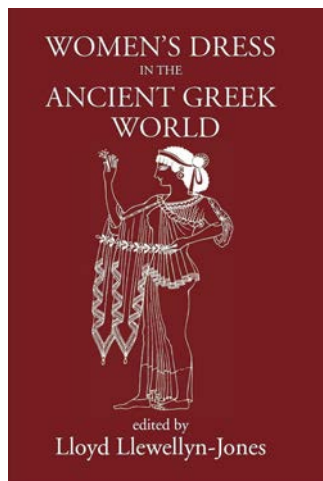
## Book Review

### Women’s Dress in the Ancient Greek World

Llewellyn-Jones (L.) (ed.) Pp. 276. Cardiff: Classical Press of Wales, 2023. Paper, £17.50. ISBN: 9781914535369

Noa Cebon

Merchant Taylors’ School, London, UK  
Njc@mtsn.org.uk



This collection of scholarly essays, curated by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, details all thinkable facets of women’s clothing and appearance in the ancient Greek world. The essays vary in both comprehensibility (and, arguably, appeal), but they pertain to such a broad range of topics that the book will be useful to almost any Classical Civilisation classroom. As a teacher of Greek Art myself, it has been particularly exciting to

see several prescribed pieces used as case studies. Due to some obvious links, teachers of ‘Greek Art’, ‘Love and Relationships’, and ‘Women in the Ancient World’ will likely find the most utility in the book.

A-level Classical Civilisation teachers may use this book to fulfil the scholarship requirement for certain modules of their course, and GCSE Classical Civilisation teachers will find some interesting content to simplify and then disseminate to their students, or give *in toto* to more able students as extra reading material. Unfortunately the essays do not generally relate directly to any Ancient History modules, nor are they necessarily relevant to ancient language learning. However, do feel free to review the table below for yourself, to determine the relevance for your own teaching.

A word of warning though: although the feminists among us may wish otherwise, these essays frequently focus most on women’s sexuality, instead of the broader scope of ancient Greek womanhood. Llewellyn-Jones’ own paper in the collection, ‘Dress, Eroticism, and the ideal Female Body’, most obviously reflects this, and Sue Blundell states in her paper ‘Clutching at Clothes’ that ‘Sex is for women what war is for men – their main public duty’. Several of the topics will therefore likely cause some chaos in a GCSE classroom, but would be perfectly acceptable to an A-level audience. Give these essays to GCSE students at your own risk!

Here is a summary of the essays, and how they may be useful to a GCSE or A-level teacher. ‘Useful for’ indicates that an essay relates to some aspects of the stated GCSE or A-level Classical Civilisation module(s), to a variable degree.

doi: 10.1017/S2058631024000874

Constraints and contradictions		
Content	Useful for	
A thought-provoking study of how literary and artistic sources portray ideal (read: marriageable) Greek women as white/pale. How visual art, the Homeric epics, and Greek tragedy provide evidence for real women’s lives.	GCSE	The Homeric World, Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	World of the Hero, Greek Art, Love and Relationships, Greek Theatre, Invention of the Barbarian
The Graces and Colour Weaving		
Content	Useful for	
A look at the importance of the Charities/Graces (divine attendants of Aphrodite) for the clothing of brides. Particular focus on the role of weaving in marriage, using literary and artistic sources.	GCSE	The Homeric World, Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	World of the Hero, Greek Art, Love and Relationships, Greek Religion
Transvestism or Travesty		
Content	Useful for	
A study of how men and women are portrayed in komast pottery. How these vases portray gender roles, and thus how sexuality and sexual exploits feature on the vases.	GCSE	Myth and Religion, Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	Greek Art, Greek Religion, Greek Theatre

<b>The language of female hunting outfit in Ancient Greece</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
A fascinating review of the portrayal of huntresses in Greek art and literature. How these codify the women as manly but also oppositional to men, and also 'beyond control'.	GCSE	Myth and Religion, Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	World of the Hero, Greek Art, Invention of the Barbarian
<b>The meaning of the veil in Ancient Greek culture</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
An informative look at how women and men veil themselves both physically and metaphorically in Greek art and literature. Analysis of how veiling manifests a complex emotion ( <i>aidos</i> ).	GCSE	The Homeric World, Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	World of the Hero, Greek Art, Greek Theatre, Imperial Image
<b>Investing the Barbarian</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
An interesting and accessible study of how and why the Amazons were portrayed in Greek art and literature. How Amazons epitomised dangerous and powerful women, as enemies of the Greeks or otherwise.	GCSE	The Homeric World, Myth and Religion, Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	World of the Hero, Greek Art, Invention of the Barbarian
<b>Levels of concealment</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
A thorough look at how Greek prostitutes were depicted in ancient Greek literature. How clothing worn by <i>hetairai</i> in particular was more lavish than that worn by other Greek women.	GCSE	Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	World of the Hero, Greek Art, Love and Relationships
<b>Visions of gleaming textiles and a clay core</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
An interesting look at the importance of weaving to wifehood and sexuality in Ancient Greece. How weaving could be seen as a representation of these.	GCSE	Myth and Religion, Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	World of the Hero, Greek Art, Love and Relationships, Greek Religion
<b>Clutching at clothes</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
A fascinating and thorough study of women holding their clothing on Athenian vase painting. Explores how this marks out liminality, in both a physical and metaphorical sense.	GCSE	Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	Greek Art, Love and Relationships
<b>A woman's view</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
A modern take on how realistic or idealised women's clothing was in Ancient Greek art, and why this was the case. How men and women were supposed to utilise the idealised portrayals of women in that art.	GCSE	Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	Greek Art, Love and Relationships
<b>Controlling Women's Dress</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
A study of how <i>gynaikonomoi</i> ('controllers of women') controlled religious and prostitute women's dress. Followed by a series of literary sources on women's dress.	GCSE	The Homeric World, Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	World of the Hero, Greek Art, Greek Religion
<b>Clothes as sign</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
A study of the large and small Herculaneum women statue types, copied from Greek originals. Discussion of both the identity of these statues and their purpose.	GCSE	Women in the Ancient World
	A-level	Greek Art, Imperial Image

<b>Dedicated followers of fashion</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Useful for</b>	
A study of John Chrysostom's views on female clothing, and early Christian ideals for women.	GCSE	Women in the Ancient World
Relates only to the later, Christian periods of the Roman Empire (but set in Greece).	A-level	Greek Art, Imperial Image