

The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women across the Ancient World

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The real history of the Amazons in war and love

Amazons—fierce warrior women dwelling on the fringes of the known world—were the mythic archenemies of the ancient Greeks. Heracles and Achilles displayed their valor in duels with Amazon queens, and the Athenians reveled in their victory over a powerful Amazon army. In historical times, Cyrus of Persia, Alexander the Great, and the Roman general Pompey tangled with Amazons.

But just who were these bold barbarian archers on horseback who gloried in fighting, hunting, and sexual freedom? Were Amazons real? In this deeply researched, wide-ranging, and lavishly illustrated book, National Book Award finalist Adrienne Mayor presents the Amazons as they have never been seen before. This is the first comprehensive account of warrior women in myth and history across the ancient world, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Great Wall of China.

Mayor tells how amazing new archaeological discoveries of battle-scarred female skeletons buried with their weapons prove that women warriors were not merely figments of the Greek imagination. Combining classical myth and art, nomad traditions, and scientific archaeology, she reveals intimate, surprising details and original insights about the lives and legends of the women known as Amazons. Provocatively arguing that a timeless search for a balance between the sexes explains the allure of the Amazons, Mayor reminds us that there were as many Amazon love stories as there were war stories. The Greeks were not the only people enchanted by Amazons—Mayor shows that warlike women of nomadic cultures inspired exciting tales in ancient Egypt, Persia, India, Central Asia, and China.

Driven by a detective's curiosity, Mayor unearths long-buried evidence and sifts fact from fiction to show how flesh-and-blood women of the Eurasian steppes were mythologized as Amazons, the equals of men. The result is likely to become a classic.

"In her groundbreaking book, Adrienne Mayor has gone above and beyond all past works in making the Amazon women of legend real. The stories of who the Amazons were, how they really lived, and why they loved their lives with such timeless vivacity make the reader of this sensational work want to stand up and raise her sword to the sky to cheer! Never before has one author so seamlessly merged the iconic lives and lore of the Amazons with genuine images, facts, and research. With the depth of a textbook and the easy conversational style of a good friend, Mayor rapidly dispels myths about one of the strongest female cultures in history while uplifting the hearts of readers with dreams of strength and adventure. The Amazons is an absolute must-have for any person who yearns to learn about how women in the ancient world really lived and for those modern heroes and heroines who will surely be inspired by the rich, vibrant history of our world's cultures."--Virginia Hankins, actress-stuntwoman

"The Amazons is a stupendous achievement--a long-anticipated centerpiece in the great puzzle of humankind. The story of these forbidden women, silenced for so long by the

rigidity of traditional scholarship, is as exciting and surprising as a bestselling murder mystery; I simply couldn't put it down. Through scholarly brilliance and passion, Adrienne Mayor has opened the door to a forgotten world of gender equality, and her book ought to be required reading in every college history course."--Anne Fortier, author of *The Lost Sisterhood: A Novel*

"Nobody brings ancient history and archaeology to life like Adrienne Mayor. From the Russian steppes to China, and from Roman Egypt and Arabia to the Etruscans, she leads the reader on a breathtaking quest for the real ancient warrior women reflected in myths--their daring, archery, tattoos, fine horses, and independence from male control. The book's rich erudition, communicated in sparkling prose and beautiful illustrations, makes it a riveting read."--Edith Hall, author of *Introducing the Ancient Greeks: From Bronze Age Seafarers to Navigators of the Western Mind*

"Adrienne Mayor's inquiry into the myth--and surprising reality--of Amazon women begins with the fierce Greek huntress Atalanta, but takes us deep into the past and as far afield as the Great Wall of China. With the restless curiosity and meticulous scholarship that have become her hallmark, the author once again has found a gap in my bookshelf and filled it, admirably."--Steven Saylor, author of *Raiders of the Nile: A Novel of the Ancient World*

"Adrienne Mayor excels at demonstrating the truth that lies behind what seems simply storytelling, and there is no more exciting confrontation of myth and history than in the story of the Amazons. This is a great book--at once exhaustive, scholarly, thrilling, and imaginative, spanning the history, art, and imagination of ancient peoples from Italy to China."--John Boardman, University of Oxford

"One can only wonder at the courage and conviction of the ancient warrior women who dared to defy their peers, and who became such powerful inspirations that their memory lives on for millennia. We owe it to them to remember their stories. Adrienne Mayor's fabulous book illuminates a complex picture of ancient lives. It gives us the chance to understand these amazing female fighters, and to recognize their daughters in our midst, those who fight with courage and conviction for what they know is a better world."--Samantha "Swords" Catto-Mott, medieval long-sword champion and creator of special effects in film

"In this fascinating book, which combines flowing prose, a lively and engaging presentation, and wonderful illustrations, Adrienne Mayor brings the reader into the excitement of discovering the truth about the Amazons. She demonstrates quite convincingly that the Amazon traditions largely derive from the undeniable historical fact that nomadic, armed horsewomen existed on the fringes of the ancient Greek world. Mayor is the first to examine the evidence systematically and in detail and she makes a concrete and persuasive case."--William Hansen, author of *Classical Mythology: A Guide to the Mythical World of the Greeks and Romans*

"In this comprehensive account of the Amazons, Adrienne Mayor examines the subject in a way that no one else has done and presents overwhelming evidence that they were not

entirely fictitious. Only Mayor has looked at the evidence from all the relevant fields to show how, together, they can solve what to each of them separately are complete mysteries. This will be the classic book on the subject for a very long time."--Elizabeth Wayland Barber, author of *The Dancing Goddesses: Folklore, Archaeology, and the Origins of European Dance*

Adrienne Mayor is a research scholar in classics and history of science at Stanford University, and the author of *The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates, Rome's Deadliest Enemy* (Princeton), which was a finalist for the National Book Award.

Other Books

Queer Ukraine. Against the backdrop of brutal invasion, it is much easier for right-wing figures to target marginalised groups, and during wartime the queer community is exceedingly vulnerable to persecution, scapegoating and censorship. Being visibly queer in Ukraine is an act of rebellion in itself, but LGBTQI+ people find ways to express themselves against all odds, to create beyond all constraints. And what is queerness without defiance - the linking of arms, the echo of a hundred voices? Every voice tells a story, and this anthology is a platform for these voices, an archive of their existence. It is time for them to tell their stories on their own terms - and for the rest of the world to stand in solidarity with them. Proceeds from the sales of this book go to a selection of charities supporting LGBTQI+ people in Ukraine. The list is periodically reviewed so that funds go to where they're most sorely needed, but includes: TU Platform Mariupol (Supporting queer youth), Queers For Ukraine (Supporting people with HIV in Ukraine and delivering much-needed hormones for the trans community) and Insight NGO (Humanitarian Aid for the LGBTQI+ community in Ukraine).

1 Natalie Haynes, 'The Amazons : Lives and Legends of Warrior Women Across the Ancient World', *Independent* (16 October 2014). 2 'Pod Dneprom nashli skhivskuyu amazonku' ('Scythian Amazon found near the Dnipro'), *Dnepr Vecherniy* (8 August ..."