

Book Review: *Women and War in Antiquity*

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Shane Hubbard is a Master's student in the School of Languages and Literatures and European Studies at the University of Guelph.
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Book Under Review

Fabre-Serris, Jacqueline, and Alison Keith, eds. 2015. *Women and War in Antiquity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jacqueline Fabre-Serris and Alison Keith's book *Women and War in Antiquity* is a compendium of articles designed to explore the often neglected subject of the involvement of women in the theatre of war in antiquity. In this goal, Fabre-Serris and Keith have been most successful. The articles in this volume delve into the many diverse ways in which women have both participated in, and been a product of, war in both ancient Greece and Rome. The subject matter of these studies varies widely from Phillipe Rousseau's examination of Homer's epics and the dismissal of women from masculine activities in "War, Speech, and the Bow Are Not Women's Business," to Alison Sharrock's investigation into the participation of women on the battlefields of fictional works in "Warrior Women in Roman Epic," to Violaine Sebilotte-Cuchet's reinterpretation of archaeological and historically literary sources in the analysis of Carian queens and their relation to the warrior women who preceded them in "The Warrior Queens of Caria (Fifth to Fourth Centuries BCE): Archaeology, History, and Historiography."

The methodology these scholars employ is wide ranging as we read the voices of historians and literary critics throughout the work, something that Fabre-Serris and Keith note as being central to the conference that inspired this book. This volume effectively takes the whole of classical antiquity—the Greek and Roman, as well as the mythical, historical, literary, and dramatic—and packages it neatly with women at its very center, doing away with the conventional notion of war as a strictly masculine endeavour.

The approach that Fabre-Serris and Keith have taken here is to bring contemporary gender and women's studies together with the classics; as such, this interdisciplinary work will be of great value to a variety of readers beyond those interested strictly with the history and philology of antiquity. The contributors bring compelling perspectives to this collection, and despite the minor caveat that some insights might reach beyond the purview of the ancient sources, these works

make it abundantly clear that a discipline as traditional as the classics can evolve in the face of contemporary methodologies. Though this collection might not, ultimately, thrust the women of antiquity to the forefront of discourses on warfare, it has the potential to inspire future scholarship on the subject; herein lies its greatest strength. This volume is not only valuable to the ardent classicist, but to the general reader interested in the role of women in societies, both ancient and modern.