



Greek Heroine Cults (Wisconsin Studies in Classics)

Jennifer L. Larson

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This is the first book to show that the worship of heroines, as well as of gods and heroes, was widespread in the Greek world from the eighth through the fourth centuries B.C. Drawing upon textual, archaeological, and iconographic evidence as diverse as ancient travel writing, ritual calendars, votive reliefs, and Euripidean drama, Jennifer Larson demonstrates the pervasiveness of heroine cults at every level of Athenian society.

Larson reveals that a broad range of heroic cults existed throughout the Greek world, encompassing not only individuals but couples (Pelops and Hippodameia, Alexandra and Agamemnon, Helen and Menelaos) and families such as those of Asklepios and the Dioskouroi. She shows how heroic cults reinforced the Greeks' gender expectations for both women and men through ritual status, iconography, and narrative motifs. Finally, Larson looks at the intersection of heroine cults with specific topics such as myths of maiden sacrifice, the Amazons, the role of the goddess Artemis, and folk beliefs about female "ghosts."

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