Women in History
**Women's history**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women in...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Legal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Computing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nobel Prize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buddhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hinduism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Judaism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sikhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...the arts &amp; humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Speculative fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...cultural works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Women's history** is the study of the role that women have played in history, together with the methods needed to study women. It includes the study of the history of the growth (and decline) of woman's rights throughout recorded history, the examination of individual woman of historical significance, and the effect that historical events have had on women. Inherent in the study of woman's history is the belief that more traditional recordings of history have minimized or ignored the contributions of women and the effect that historical events had on women as a whole; in this respect, woman's history is often a form of historical revisionism, seeking to challenge or expand the traditional historical consensus.

The main centers of scholarship have been the U.S. and Britain, where 'second wave' feminist historians, influenced by the new approaches promoted by social history, led the way. As activists in the women's liberation, discussing and analyzing the oppression and inequalities they experienced as women, they felt it imperative to find out about the lives of their foremothers -- and found very little scholarship in print. History was written mainly by men and about men's activities in the public sphere -- war, politics, diplomacy and administration. Women were usually excluded and, when mentioned, were usually portrayed in sex-stereotypical roles, such as wives, mothers, daughters and mistresses. History was value laden in regard to what was considered historically 'worthy'.[1]
Regions

Western Europe

Britain

Although in the 21st century women have much the same rights as men, the major changes came in the 19th and 20th century. They ran the household, bore the children, were nurses, mothers, wives, neighbours, friends and teachers, but very little of their activities was formally recorded.

Although some work appeared in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Scottish women's history did not really develop as a field until the 1980's, with most work on women before 1700 appearing in the last two decades. Several recent studies have taken a biographical approach, but other work has drawn on the insights from research elsewhere to examine such issues as work, family, religion, crime, and images of women. Scholars are also uncovering women's voices in their letters, memoirs, poetry, and court records. Because of the late development of the field, much recent work has been recuperative, but increasingly the insights of gender history both in other countries and in Scottish history after 1700 are being used to frame the questions that are asked. Future work should contribute both to a reinterpretation of the current narratives of Scottish history and also to a deepening of the complexity of the history of women in late medieval and early modern Britain and Europe.[2]

France

French historians have taken a unique approach with a great deal of scholarship in women's and gender history despite the lack of women's and gender study programs or departments at the university level. The high level of research and publication in women's and gender history is due to the high interest within French society. This structural discrimination against the study of gender history in France is changing due to international studies increasing with the formation of the European Union and more French scholars seeking appointments outside Europe.[3]

Pre-Revolution

In the Ancien Régime in France very few women held any power—some queens did, as did the heads of Catholic convents. In the Enlightenment the writings of philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau gave political program for reform of the ancien régime, founded on a reform of domestic mores. Rousseau's conception of the relations between private and public spheres is more unified than that found in modern sociology. Rousseau argued that the domestic role of women is a structural precondition for a "modern" society.[4]

Salic law prohibited women from rule; however, the laws for the case of a regency, when the king was too young to govern by himself, brought the queen into the center of power. The queen could assure the passage of power from one king to another—from her late husband to her young son—while simultaneously assuring the continuity of the dynasty.

Education for girls

Educational aspirations were on the rise and were becoming increasingly institutionalized in order to supply the church and state with the functionaries to serve as their future administrators. Girls were schooled too, but not to assume political responsibility. Girls were ineligible for leadership positions and were generally considered to have an inferior intellect to their brothers. France had many small local schools where working-class children - both boys and girls - learned to read, the better "to know, love, and serve God." The sons and daughters of the noble and bourgeois elites, however, were given quite distinct educations: boys were sent to upper school, perhaps a university, while their sisters - if they were lucky enough to leave the house - would be sent to board at a convent with a vague curriculum. The Enlightenment challenged this model, but no real alternative presented itself for female education. Only through education at home were knowledgeable women formed, usually to the sole end of dazzling their
Women's history

salons. [5]

Eastern Europe
Interest in the study of women's history in Eastern Europe has been delayed. [6] Representative is Hungary, where the historiography has been explored by Pető and Szapor (2007). Academia resisted incorporating this specialized field of history, primarily because of the political atmosphere and a lack of institutional support. Before 1945, historiography dealt chiefly with nationalist themes that supported the antidemocratic political agenda of the state. After 1945, academia reflected a Soviet model. Instead of providing an atmosphere in which women could be the subjects of history, this era ignored the role of the women's rights movement in the early 1900s. The collapse of Communism in 1989 was followed by a decade of promising developments in which biographies of prominent Hungarian women were published and important moments of women's political and cultural history were the subjects of research. However, the quality of this scholarship was uneven and failed to take advantage of the methodological advances in research in the West. In addition, institutional resistance continued, as evidenced by the lack of undergraduate or graduate programs dedicated to women's and gender history at Hungarian universities. [7]

Japan
Japanese women's history was marginal to historical scholarship until the late 20th century. The subject hardly existed before 1945 and even after that date many academic historians were reluctant to accept women's history as a part of Japanese history. However, the social and political climate of the 1980s in particular, favorable in many ways to women, gave opportunities for Japanese women's historiography to promote itself and also brought the subject fuller academic recognition. Exciting and innovative research on Japanese women's history began in the 1980s. Much of this has been conducted not only by academic women's historians, but also by freelance writers, journalists, and amateur historians; that is, by people who have been less saddled with traditional historical methods and expectations. The study of Japanese women's history has now reached the point where the subject no longer requires justification. [8]

Themes

Rights and equality
Women's rights refers to the social and human rights of women. In the United States, the abolition movements sparked an increased wave of attention on the status of women, but the History of feminism reaches far back before the 18th century. (See Protofeminist.) The advent of the reformist age during the 19th century meant that those invisible minorities or marginalized majorities were to find a catalyst and a microcosm in such new tendencies of reform. The earliest works on the so-called "woman question" criticized the restrictive role of women, without necessarily claiming that women were disadvantaged or that men were to blame. In the UK, the Feminism movement began in the 1800s and continues in the present day. In the early 20th century, Simone de Beauvoir wrote a detailed analysis of women's oppression. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, feminist movements, such as the one in the United States substantially changed the condition of women in the Western world. The trigger for the revolution was the development of the birth control pill in 1960, which gave women access to easy and reliable contraception.

Employment
The 1870 US Census was the first to count "Females engaged in each and every occupation" and provides an intriguing snapshot of women's history. It reveals that, contrary to popular belief, not all American women of the Victorian period were either idle in their middle class homes or working in sweatshops. Women were 15% of the total work force (1.8 million out of 12.5). They made up one-third of factory "operatives," to be sure, but teaching and the more gentle occupations of dressmaking, millinery, and tailoring played a larger role. Two-thirds of teachers
Women's history

were women. And they could be found in such unexpected places as iron and steel works (495), mines (46), sawmills (35), oil wells and refineries (40), gas works (4), and charcoal kilns (5), and held such surprising jobs as ship rigger (16), teamster (196), turpentine laborer (185), brass founder/worker (102), shingle and lathe maker (84), stock-herder (45), gun and locksmith (33), hunter and trapper (2). There were five lawyers, 24 dentists, and 2,000 doctors.

**Sex and reproduction**

In the history of sex, the social construction of sexual behavior - its taboos, regulation and social and political impact - has had a profound effect on women in the world since prehistoric times. The history of abortion dates back to ancient times and has impacted men and women in a variety of ways in different times and places. Historically, it is unclear how often the ethics of abortion (induced abortion) was discussed. In the later half of the 20th century some nations began to legalize abortion. This controversial subject has sparked heated debate and in some cases even violence.

Women have been exposed to various tortuous sexual conditions and have been discriminated against in various fashions in history. An example are the comfort women, women who were forced to work as prostitutes in military brothels in Japanese-occupied countries during World War II.

**Clothing**

The social aspects of clothing has been related to the traditions regarding certain items of clothing intrinsically suited different gender roles. In particular, the wearing of skirts and trousers has given rise to common phrases expressing implied restrictions in use and disapproval of offending behaviour. For example, ancient Greeks often considered the wearing of trousers by Persian men as a sign of an effeminate attitude. Women's clothing in Victorian fashion was used as a means of control and admiration. Reactions to the elaborate confections of French fashion led to various calls for reform on the grounds of both beauty (Artistic and Aesthetic dress) and health (dress reform; especially for undergarments and lingerie). Although trousers for women did not become fashion items until the later 20th century, women began wearing men's trousers (suitably altered) for outdoor work a hundred years earlier. In the 1960s, André Courrèges introduced long trousers for women as a fashion item, leading to the era of the pantsuit and designer jeans and the gradual eroding of the prohibitions against girls and women wearing trousers in schools, the workplace, and fine restaurants. Corsets also have long been used for fashion, and body modification, such as waistline reduction. There were, and are, many different styles and types of corsets, varying depending on the intended use, corset maker's style, and the fashions of the era.

**Status**
The status of Women in the Victoria Era is often seen as an illustration of the striking discrepancy between the nation's power and richness and what many, then and now, consider its appalling social conditions. Victorian morality was full of many contradictions. A plethora of social movements concerned with improving public morals co-existed with a class system that permitted harsh living conditions for many, such as women. There is an apparent contradiction between the widespread cultivation of an outward appearance of dignity and restraint and the prevalence of social phenomena that included prostitution. In the Victorian era, the bathing machine was developed. It was a device that flourished in the 19th century to allow people to wade in the ocean at beaches without violating Victorian notions of modesty. The bathing machine was part of sea-bathing etiquette that was more rigorously enforced upon women than men.

Religion

The Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, Islamic and Christian views about women vary considerably today and have varied even more throughout the last two millennia, evolving along with or counter to the societies in which people have lived. For much of history, the role of women in the life of the church both local and universal has been downplayed, overlooked, or simply denied.\[^9\] When some women have interreligious marriage, or marriage (either religious or civil) between partners professing different religions, they seldom can do so without disobeying both of these religions.

Further reading

World

Primary sources


Ancient

- Pomeroy, Sarah B. *Women's History and Ancient History* (1991) online edition

Asia

China


Europe

- Boxer, Marilyn J. Boxer, Jean H. Quataert, and Joan W. Scott, eds. *Connecting Spheres: European Women in a Globalizing World, 1500 to the Present* (2000), essays by scholars excerpt and text search
- Bridenthal, Renate, Susan Stuard, and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks eds. *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (2nd ed. 1997), essays by scholars
- Stearns, Peter, ed. *Encyclopedia of European Social History from 1350 to 2000* (6 vol 2000), 209 essays by leading scholars in 3000 pp.; many aspects of women's history covered
- Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E. *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (2008) excerpt and text search
Women's history

Primary sources: Europe

• DiCaprio, Lisa, and Merry E. Wiesner, eds. Lives and Voices: Sources in European Women's History (2000) excerpt and text search [16]
• Hughes, Sarah S., and Brady Hughes, eds. Women in World History: Readings from Prehistory to 1500 (1995), 270pp primary sources.
  • Hughes, Sarah S., and Brady Hughes, eds. Women in World History: Readings from 1500 to the Present (1997) 296pp; primary sources

Canada

• Cook, Sharon Anne; McLean, Lorna; and O'Rourke, Kate, eds. Framing Our Past: Canadian Women’s History in the Twentieth Century. (2001). 498 pp.
• Prentice, Alison and Trofimenkoff, Susan Mann, eds. The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History (2 vol 1985)

United States

Surveys

• Banner, Lois. Women in modern America: a brief history. San Diego 1984
• Daniel, Robert L. American women in the twentieth century San Diego 1987
• Degler, Carl. At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (1980).
• Hewitt, Nancy A. A Companion to American Women’s History (2005) excerpt and text search [17]
• Pleck, Elizabeth H. and Nancy F. Cott, eds. A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women (2008), essays by scholars excerpt and text search [21]
• Riley, Glenda. Inventing the American Woman: An Inclusive History (2001) vol 2 online edition [22]

Specific studies

• Brown, Kathleen M. Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia (1996)
• Campbell, D'Ann. Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Public Era, (1984), World War II; covers housewives, nurses, Wacs, war-workers
• Mintz, Steven, and Susan Kellogg. Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life (1988), 316pp; the standard scholarly history excerpt and text search [23]
Primary sources: U.S.

Historiography
- Spongberg, Mary. *Writing Women's History Since the Renaissance.* (2003) 308 pages; on Europe

See also
The following is a list of issues in Wikipedia either about women's history, or containing relevant information, often in a "History" section.

Lists
- List of women's organizations
- List of current and historical women's universities and colleges
  A women's college is an institution of higher education where enrollment is all-female. Where institutions have become coeducational, this is noted, along with the year the enrollment policy was changed.
- List of feminists
- List of 20th century women artists
- Women's History Month
  March is a month to celebrate the Women's history and International Women's Day.
General
- Family history
- Gender history
- History of feminism

Political and legal
- Equal Rights Amendment
  A proposed amendment to the United States Constitution which would have guaranteed equal rights under law for Americans regardless of gender.
- Women's suffrage.
- Suffragette
  Suffragettes are members of the women's suffrage movement in the Britain. Suffragist is a more general term for members of the movement, whether radical or conservative. American women preferred "suffragist" because of the violent connotations of the British "suffragette".
- A History of Woman Suffrage
  A history book of the suffrage movement, primarily in the United States, composed of six volumes from 1887 to 1922.
- Men's League for Women's Suffrage
- Woman's Christian Temperance Union
  The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is the oldest continuing non-sectarian women's organization in the US and worldwide.
- The Subjection of Women
  This is the title of an essay written by John Stuart Mill in 1869, stating his views in favor of a much wider selection of people being allowed to vote.

Sexuality
- Sexuality and gender identity-based cultures
  It concerns the culture, knowledge, and references shared by various people by virtue of their membership in a minorities or their state of being transgendered.
- Effeminacy
  Effeminacy is character trait of a male showing femininity, unmanliness, womanliness, weakness, softness and/or a delicacy, which contradicts traditional masculine, male gender roles.

Research
- Schlesinger Library
- The Women's Library (London)
- GENESIS
  Guide to sources for women's history in the British Isles

Other
- Demography
  Demography is the study of human population dynamics. It encompasses the study of the size, structure and distribution of populations, and how populations change over time due to births, deaths, migration and aging.
- Herstory
Women's history

- History of feminism
- Women in Family history

External links
- The Gerritsen Collection - Women's History Online
- Feminist Majority Foundation timeline
- Genesis: a mapping initiative to identify and develop access to women's history sources in the British Isles
- Places Where Women Made History, a National Park Service Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary
- Women in World History

References
Timeline of women's rights (other than voting)

The timeline signifies the major events in the development of women's rights and issues of gender inequality. It does not concentrate merely on the right to vote (Timeline of women's suffrage).

Before the 19th century

- 622 Arabia: The Constitution of Medina is declared, which outlines many of Muhammad's early reforms under Islam, including an improved legal status for women in Islam, who were generally given greater rights than women in pre-Islamic Arabia[1][2] and medieval Europe.[3]
- 1718: Sweden: Female taxpaying members of the cities' guilds are allowed to vote and stand for election during the age of liberty; this right is banned (for local elections) in 1758 and (general elections) in 1771.
- 1754: Germany: Dorothea Erxleben the first woman doctor.
- 1776: France: Female tailors are allowed in to the guild of tailors.
- 1778: Sweden: unmarried women are allowed to leave their home town to give birth anonymously and have the birth registered anonymously, to not answer any questions about the birth and, if they choose to keep their child, to have their unmarried status not mentioned in official documents to avoid social embarrassment.
- 1788: France: noble widows are known to have voted to the Assembly of the Estates in 1788-89 in the absence of a male guardian. United States of America (to stand for election).
- 1789: France is the first country in Europe where it is suggested that women are to be in the Assembly of the Estates, there are several demands to include women in the reforms of the right to vote.
- 1790: France: Equal inheritance rights (later abolished).[4]
- 1792: France: The reformed laws of marriage and divorce greatly favours women's equal rights in France, but all of these laws are abolished by Napoleon Bonaparte's Code Napoleon in 1804[4].
Timeline of women's rights (other than voting)

• 1792: France : Local women-units of the defense army are founded in several cities; although the military was never officially open to women, about eight thousand women were estimated to have served openly in the French armé in local troops (but not in the battle fields) between 1792 and 1794, but women were officially barred from the armé in 1795[4].
• 1793: France : The question of women's right to vote is discussed in the parliament; women's right to vote is acknowledged as a principle, but it is still put aside with the view that the time is not right to make this a reality and is therefore postponed[4].

19th century

• 1810: Sweden: Unmarried women are allowed to be declared of legal majority by royal dispensation.
• 1821: USA : The first Women's university is founded.
• 1829: India : Sati is banned.
• 1833: USA : The first co-educational university, Oberlin, open to both sexes is founded in Ohio.
• 1839: Great Britain: it is made possible for mothers to be made guardian for children at divorce. Mississippi in USA: Married women are allowed separate economy from their husbands.
• 1841: Bulgaria: The first girls school makes education for women available.
• 1842: Sweden: Elementary school compulsory by law for both boys and girls.
• 1845: Sweden: Equal inheritance for sons and daughters (in the absence of a will)[5].
• 1846: Sweden: Professions within the trades are opened on the same terms as men for all unmarried women.
• 1847: Belgium: Elementary school for both genders
• 1848: The state of New York in the United States : Separate economy and independence allowed for married women.
• 1849: Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the first female doctor in USA, and in 1858 also in Great Britain.
• 1850: Iceland : Legal majority for (unmarried) women in Iceland.
• 1851: Guatemala: Women who fulfill the demands of personal economic wealth are granted citizenship.
Timeline of women's rights (other than voting)

- 1853: Sweden: Women formally allowed to teach at universities.
- 1854: Norway: Equal inheritance rights.
  Massachusetts in USA: Married women granted separate economy and legal majority.
- 1857: Denmark: Women (if unmarried) are declared to be of legal majority in Denmark; no longer minors in law. Great Britain: formal Divorce, not just legal separation, is made possible.
- 1858: Sweden: Legal majority for unmarried women[^5].
- 1859: Sweden: Several professions of lower officials are opened to women. Canada: Married women granted the right to own property.
- 1861: Sweden: The profession of dentist is open to women in Sweden; Rosalie Fougelberg becomes the first woman dentist and the personal dentist of the queen in 1867 (though Amalia Assur was first, but with a special permission). USA: Lucy Hobbs Taylor becomes the first woman dentist. France: Julie-Victoire Daubié becomes the first female student.
- 1863: Norway: Unmarried women granted legal majority (at the same age as men in 1869).
- 1864: Finland: Legal majority for women. Sweden: Unmarried female industry workers are given the same rights as men. Sweden: Husbands are forbidden to abuse their wives.
- 1865: Italy: Legal majority for unmarried women is granted by the new constitution. Switzerland: Women are allowed to study.
- 1867: Russia: Women allowed to study in Russia (at the same terms as men in 1905) and in Finland (at the same terms as men in 1901).
- 1868: The United States formally allows women to study, although several universities had already been open to women earlier.
- 1870: Great Britain: Legal majority for unmarried women; this law is improved in 1874, 1882, and in 1893. Sweden: Women are allowed to study (at the same terms as men 1873)[^5] the first female student is Betty Pettersson. India: The murder of female infants is banned.
• 1871: Japan: The first female students are granted scholarships to the United states.
• 1872: Sweden: Arranged marriages are forbidden. Canada: Women with dependent children who have no
husband may have homestead land in accordance with the Public Lands of the Dominion Statute. Japan: geishas
are made independent.
• 1873: Britain: Mothers are granted guardianship for children at divorce. Custody of Infants Act 1873. Japan:
Schools for the education of women to various professions are founded.
• 1874: The Netherlands: Aletta Jacobs becomes the first woman allowed to study medicine. Italy: The universities
open to women. Sweden: Married women are granted economical equality and legal majority. France: The first
female trade union. Japan: Elementary education for both genders, the profession of school teacher is opened to
both sexes.
• 1875: Denmark: Women allowed to study.
• 1876: Great Britain: Women formally allowed to study.
• 1877: Chile: Women are allowed to study.
• 1878: Finland: Equality in inheritance. Great Britain: Abuse is recognized as grounds for divorce.
• 1879: Brazil: Women allowed to study.
• 1880: France: Women are allowed to study. Belgium: Women are allowed to study. Australia: Women are
allowed to study. Canada: Women are allowed to study.
• 1882: Great Britain: Married women are granted separate economy and legal majority (Married Women's
Property Act 1882). USA: Women are granted legal majority in the entire USA. France: Elementary school for
both genders.
• 1883: Romania: women allowed to study (Coeducation at the universities).
• 1884: Norway: women allowed to study. Germany: Legal majority for unmarried women. Mexico: Legal majority
for unmarried women. Ontario: married women are given control over their own property.
• 1885: France: Divorce is again allowed (after having been abolished since 1814).
• 1886: Britain: Josephine Butler puts a stop to the prostitution reglement. Mexico: The first women attend
university.
• 1888: Spain: women are allowed to study with a written approval from a male guardian. Norway: Legal majority
for married women.
• 1889: Sweden: women electable to social boards in schools and poor-care.
• 1891: India: Females younger than 12 are banned from marrying (Child marriage).
• 1895: South Carolina in the United States: Separate economy allowed for married women. Upper Canada:
Women allowed to work as barristers.
• 1896: Austria-Hungary (and thereby also the future Czech Republic and Slovakia): women allowed to study. The
profession of lawyer are opened to both sexes in USA as a whole - but the first female lawyer in an American
state was recorded already in 1869.
• 1898: Haiti: women allowed to study.
• 1899: Denmark: Legal majority for married women.
20th century

- 1900: Belgium: Legal majority for women in Belgium. Iceland: legal majority for married women. Egypt and Tunisia: Girls schools are founded. Japan: foundation of a women's university. France: The profession of lawyer are opened to both sexes.
- 1902: China: Foot binding is abolished, after having handicapped women's feet since ca 1010.
- 1906: Finland (to stand for election). Sweden: municipal suffrage, since 1862 granted to unmarried women and widows, are allowed also for married women.
- 1908: Married women in France granted legal majority and economical equality, and the women of all of Germany are allowed to study.
- 1909: Sweden: women granted eligibility to municipal councils.
- 1917: Netherlands (to stand for election)
- 1920: Married women in France granted legal majority and the women of all of Germany are allowed to study.
- 1920: Sweden: reformed marriage act grants the spouses equal rights.
- 1921: Belgium (to stand for election). Full equal rights for married women in Sweden.
- 1922: Belgium and Japan: women are allowed to be lawyers.
- 1926: Turkey: Women are granted legal majority, are admitted to the universities, and the harems and the veil are abolished.
- 1927: Mexico: Legal majority for married women.
- 1931-36: Iran: Women are allowed to study, and the veil is abolished.
- 1934: Turkey (to stand for election)
- 1937: Puerto Rico (to stand for election).
- 1938: Sweden: Contraception are allowed.
- 1939: Sweden: It becomes forbidden to fire a woman for marrying or having children.
- 1945: 'British Guiana'-Guyana (to stand for election)
- 1946: 'Burma'-Myanmar (to stand for election)
- 1953: Mexico (to stand for election)
- 1960: Canada (to stand for election, with no restrictions/conditions)
- 1961: El Salvador (to stand for election)
- 1963: Papua New Guinea (to stand for election)
- 1970: Democratic Republic of the Congo (to stand for election)
- 1973: Andorra, San Marino (to stand for election)
- 1975: The right to abortion is secured in Sweden.
- 1978: 'Rhodesia'-Zimbabwe (to stand for election)
- 1986: Djibouti (to stand for election)
21st century

• 2009: Norway: the new prostitution law bans the buying of sexual favours rather than selling.
• 2009: Iceland: the new prostitution law bans the buying of sexual favours rather than selling.

See also

• Women's rights
• History of feminism
• Legal rights of women in history
• List of pre-21st-century female scientists
• List of the first female holders of political office in Europe
• Women in the workforce

References

• To stand for election [8]
• Timeline [9]
• http://www.ibiblio.org/prism/mar98/path.html
• Herman Lindqvist : Revolution (Revolution!) (Swedish)
• Lilla Focus Uppslagsbok (Little Focus Encyclopedia) Focus Uppslagsböcker AB (1979) (Swedish)
• http://www.popularhistoria.se/o.o.i.s?id=43&vid=368 (Swedish)
• http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=7846&a=124701 (Swedish)
• http://www.barnhuset/index.php?id=12&language=svenska (Swedish)
• http://web.telia.com/~u55504841/cdbgm00/cdbgm07/qlagar.htm (Swedish)
• http://www.ddss.nu/swedish/means/parent.htm (Swedish)
• http://www.cenara.com/users/ce01914/sloff/sob/99-2/kvavda_barn.htm (Swedish)
• http://famouscanadianwomen.com/timeline/timeline1850-1899.htm
• http://www.hist.uu.se/historikermote05/program/Politik/52_Karlsson_Sjogren.pdf
• Åsa Karlsson-Sjögren : Männen, kvinnorna och rösträtten: medborgarskap och representation 1723-1866 (Men, women and the vote: citizenship and representation 1723-1866) (Swedish)
• Some of the information in this article is based on its equivalents on Portuguese, Brazilian and Japanese Wikipedia

References

[4] * Herman Lindqvist : Revolution (Revolution!) (Swedish)
[5] * Lilla Focus Uppslagsbok (Little Focus Encyclopedia) Focus Uppslagsböcker AB (1979) (Swedish)
[7] Routledge International Encyclopedia ... - Google Böcker (http://books.google.se/books?id=No0hs5D0qGgGc&pg=PA737&lpg=PA737&dq=china+beijing+woman+student+1920&source=bl&ots=bV7iSWVVig&sig=FbiBiOG4MWMnMWhLWu9WuZFa0Jqk&hl=sv&ei=CpevS7nuFs4-QzZhmCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CBMQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=china%20beijing%20woman%20student%201920&t=f=false)
Legal rights of women in history

The **Legal rights of women** refers to the social and human rights of women. One of the first women's rights declarations was the *Declaration of Sentiments*.\[1\] The dependent position of women in early law is proved by the evidence of most ancient systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women in...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Legal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Computing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nobel Prize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buddhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hinduism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Judaism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sikhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...the arts &amp;humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Speculative fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...cultural works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mosaic law

In the Mosaic law, for monetary matters, women's and men's rights were almost exactly equal. A woman was entitled to her own private property, including land, livestock, slaves, and servants. A woman had the right to inherit whatever anyone bequeathed to her as a death gift, and in the absence of sons would inherit everything. A woman could likewise bequeath her belongings to others as a death gift. Upon dying intestate, a woman would be inherited by her children if she had them, her husband if she was married, or her father if she were single. A woman could sue in court and did not need a male to represent her.

In some situations, women actually had more rights than men. For example, captive women had to be ransomed prior to any male captives. Even though sons inherited property, they had a responsibility to support their mother and sisters from the estate, and had to ensure that both mother and sisters were taken care of prior to their being able to benefit from the inheritance, and if that wiped out the estate, the boys had to supplement their income from elsewhere.

When it came to specific religious or sacramental activities, women had fewer opportunities or privileges than men. For example, in monetary or capital cases women could not serve as witnesses. A woman could not serve as a kohen in the Temple. A woman could not serve as queen, the monarch had to be male. A divorce could only be granted by the husband, upon which time she would receive the Ketubah and the return of significant portions of her dowry. The vow of an unmarried girl between the ages of 12 years and 12 years and six months might be nullified by her father and the vow of a wife which affected marital obligations may be annullled by her husband; the guilt or innocence of a wife accused of adultery might tested through the Sotah process, although this only was successful if the husband was innocent of adultery, and daughters could inherit only in the absence of sons.

Egyptian law

In Ancient Egypt, legally, a woman shared the same rights and status as a man - at least, theoretically. An Egyptian woman was entitled to her own private property, which could include land, livestock, slaves and servants, etc. She had the right to inherit whatever anyone bequeathed to her, as well as bequeathing her belongings to others. She could divorce her husband (upon which all possessions belonging to her - including the dowry - were reverted to her sole ownership), and sue in court. Most notably, a woman could do these legal matters without a male to represent her. However, on the whole, men vastly outnumbered women in most trades, including government administrators; the average woman still centered her time around the home and family. A few women became pharaohs, and women held important positions in government and trade.

Roman law

Women in ancient Rome were citizens, but could not run for political office or vote. Roman women had little political freedom in society, but substantial freedom outside of politics, and some were outspoken and took an interest in the politics of their day. The status of a woman would vary from a fish monger with very little money to a woman of great wealth and daughter and married to prominent politicians like Caecilia Metella, and those are the women more likely to have left a mark.

Women had full capacity for themselves, but none for others, although some emperors recognized a woman's relationship to her own sons and daughters.
Christian laws and influences on women's rights

The following are a few of the matters in which Christianity appears to have made alterations, generally but perhaps not always improvements, in the law. As a rule the influence of the church was exercised in favor of the abolition of the disabilities imposed by the older law upon celibacy and childlessness, of increased facilities for entering a professed religious life, and of due provision for the wife. The church also supported the political power of those who were friendly toward the clergy. The appointment of mothers and grandmothers as tutors was sanctioned by Justinian.

The restrictions on the marriage of senators and other men of high rank with women of low rank were extended by Constantine, but it was almost entirely removed by Justinian. Second marriages were discouraged, especially by making it legal to impose a condition that a widow's right to property should cease on re-marriage, and the Leonine Constitutions at the end of the 9th century made third marriages punishable. The same constitutions made the benediction of a priest a necessary part of the ceremony of marriage.

The criminal law also changed its perspectives on women. Adultery was punished with death by Constantine, but the penalty was reduced by Justinian to banishment to a convent. A woman condemned for adultery could not re-marry. A marriage between a Christian and a Jew rendered the parties guilty of adultery.

Severe laws were enacted against offences of unchastity, especially procurement and incest. It was a capital crime to carry off or offer violence to a nun. Women were subject to penalties for wearing dress or ornaments (except rings) imitating those reserved for the emperor and his family. Actresses and women of bad fame were not to wear the dress of virgins dedicated to Heaven. If a consul had a wife or mother living with him, he was allowed to incur greater expense than if he lived alone. The interests of working women were protected by enactments for the regulation of the gynoecia, or workshops for spinning, dyeing, etc.

The canon law, looking with disfavour on the female independence prevailing in the later Roman law, tended rather in the opposite direction. The Decretum Gratiani specially inculcated subjection of the wife to the husband, and obedience to his will in all things. The chief differences between canon and Roman law were in the law of marriage, especially in the introduction of publicity and of the formalities of the ring and the kiss. The benediction of a priest was made a necessary part of the ceremony, as indeed it had been made by the civil power, as has been already stated, in the post-Justinian period of Roman law.

Women's rights in the East

In the East, up until 1500s, women were generally treated almost as untouchable and had very few rights.[3] They were subjected to highly degrading practises like purdah (living separately from men or in seclusion, see also sex segregation); sati, the killing of the wife on the dead husband's funeral pyre; child marriage, when girls of between 5 and 10 years old were married off, without their consent or knowledge; dowry, the giving of expensive gifts by the bride's family to the groom's family in agreement to the wedding; etc.

Hindu in Ancient India

Women in ancient India used to be very respected. There is no exclusion of women according to the Vedas. Motherhood is considered the greatest glory of Hindu women. The Taittiriya Upanishad teaches, "Matridevo bhava" - "Let your mother be god to you." In this mantra of Brahmcharya Sukta, it is emphasized that girls too should train themselves as students and only then enter into married life. The Sukta specifically emphasizes that girls should receive the same level of training as boys.

Atharva Veda 11.5.18 : "Girls should train themselves to become complete scholars and youthful through Brahmcharya and then enter married life."

Atharva Veda 14.1.6 : "Parents should gift their daughter intellectuality and power of knowledge when she leaves for husband's home. They should give her a dowry of knowledge."
When girls ignore external objects and develop foresight and vibrant attitude through power of knowledge, she becomes provider of wealths of skies and earth. Then she should marry an eligible husband.

**Atharva Veda 14.1.20** : "Oh wife! Give us discourse of knowledge"

The bride may please everyone at her husband’s home through her knowledge and noble qualities.

**Atharva Veda 7.46.3** : "Teach the husband ways of earning wealth. Protector of children, having definite knowledge, worth thousands of prayers and impressing all directions, O women, you accept prosperity. O wife of deserving husband, teach your husband to enhance wealth."

**Atharva Veda 7.47.1** : "Oh woman! You are the keeper of knowledge of all types of actions (karma)."

**Atharva Veda 7.47.2** : "Oh woman! You know everything. Please provide us strength of prosperity and wealth."

**Atharva Veda 14.1.64** : "Oh woman! Utilize your vedic intellect in all directions of our home!"

**Atharva Veda 1.14.3** : "Oh groom! This bride will protect your entire family."

**Atharva Veda 2.36.3** : "May this bride become the queen of the house of her husband and enlighten all."

**Atharva Veda 11.1.17** : "These women are pure, sacred and yajniya (as respected as yajna); they provide us with subjects, animals and food."

**Atharva Veda 14.1.20** : "Hey wife! Become the queen and manager of everyone in the family of your husband."

Those verses prove that women used to be very respected. These women are pure, sacred, worth being worship, worth being served, of great character, scholarly. They have given subjects, animals and happiness to the entire society.

**Atharva Veda 12.2.31** : "Ensure that these women never weep out of sorrow. Keep them free from all diseases and give them ornaments and jewels to wear."

**Atharva Veda 14.1.50** : "Hey wife! I am holding your hand for prosperity."

**Atharva Veda 14.1.61** : "Hey bride! You shall bring bliss to all and direct our homes towards our purpose of living."

**Atharva Veda 14.2.71** : "Hey wife! I am knowledgeable and you are also knowledgeable. If I am Samved then you are Rigved."

**Atharva Veda 14.2.74** : "This bride is illuminating. She has conquered everyone's hearts!"

**Atharva Veda 7.38.4 and 12.3.52** : "Women should take part in the legislative chambers and put their views on forefront."

**Rig Veda 10.85.7** : "Parents should gift their daughter intellectuality and power of knowledge when she leaves for husband’s home. They should give her a dowry of knowledge."

**Rig Veda 3.31.1** : "The right is equal in the fathers property for both son and daughter."

The idea of equality was most forcibly expressed in the **Rig Veda (Book 5, hymn 61. verse 8)**: The commentator explains this passage thus: "The wife and husband, being the equal halves of one substance, are equal in every respect; therefore both should join and take equal parts in all work, religious and secular."

**Atharva Veda 14-1-64** "O bride! May the knowledge of the Vedas be in front of you and behind you, in your centre and in your ends. May you conduct your life after attaining the knowledge of the Vedas. May you be benevolent, the harbinger of good fortune and health and live in great dignity and indeed be illumined in your husband’s home."

**Rigveda Samhita, part 1, sukta 79, sloka 872** : "The wife should do agnihotra (yagna), sandhya (puja) and all other daily religious rituals. If, for some reason, her husband is not present, the woman alone has full rights to do yagna."

Like wise in so many other mantras a woman has been presented to play an essential role in family and as wife. Similarly she has been given the lead stage in society works, in governmental organizations, and for ruling the nation is also mentioned in Vedas.
Legal rights of women in history

Rigveda contains several Suktas containing description of Usha as a God. This Usha is representation of an ideal woman. Please refer "Usha Devata" by Pt Sri Pad Damodar Satvalekar as part of "Simple Translation of Rigveda (Rigved ka subodh bhashya)". Page 121 to 147 for summary of all such verses spread across entire Rigveda. In summary:

1. Women should be brave (Page 122, 128)
2. Women should be expert (Page 122)
3. Women should earn fame (Page 123)
4. Women should ride on chariots (Page 123)
5. Women should be scholars (Page 123)
6. Women should be prosperous and wealth (Page 125)
7. Women should be intelligent and knowledgeable (Page 126)
8. Women should be protector of family and society and get in army (Page 134, 136)
9. Women should be illuminating (Page 137)
10. Women should be provider of wealth, food and prosperity (Page 141–146)

Yajur Veda 20.9: "There are equal rights for men and women to get appointed as ruler."
Yajur Veda 16.44: "There should me a women army. Let the women be encouraged to participate in war."
Yajur Veda 10.26: "In this mantra it is enforced that the wife of ruler should give education of politics to the others. Likewise the king do justice for the people, the queen should also justify her role."

Rig Veda 10-191-3: O women! These mantras are given to you equally (as to men). May your thoughts, too, be harmonious. May your assemblies be open to all without discrimination. Your mind and consciousness should be harmonious. I (the rishi) give you these mantras equally as to men and give you all and equal powers to absorb (the full powers) of these mantras.

"Women are worthy of worship. They are the fate of the household, the lamp of enlightenment for all in the household. They bring solace to the family and are an integral part of dharmic life. Even heaven is under the control of women. The gods reside in those households where women are worshipped and in households where women are slighted all efforts at improvement go in vain." Manusmriti 3-56

About Sati

Self burning of widows was not sanctioned by the Vedic religion, but was due to other causes. Some say that, when the Mohmmadens conquered India, they treated the widows of the soldiers so brutally that the women preferred death, and voluntarily sought it.

Sir Monier Monier-Williams (1860–1888) Indologist and head of the Oxford's Boden Chair says:

"Perhaps the most important point to which Raja Ram Mohan Roy awakened was the absence of all Vedic sanction for the self-immolation of widows (Suttee). It was principally his vehement denunciation of this practice, and the agitation against it set on foot by him, which ultimately led to the abolition of Sati throughout British India in 1819."

The eighth richa (X 18.8) specifically commands a Hindu widow to return alive to her home. H. H. Wilson translates: "Rise woman, and go to the world of living beings; come, this man near whom you sleep is lifeless; you have enjoyed this state of being the wife of your husband, the suitor who took you by the hand." Here again, it is confirmed that X 18.8 actually commands a Hindu widow to return to the world of living beings. Also, this very
richa confers upon her full right on the house of her deceased husband (apne putradi aur ghar).

Those who misinterpret the Rigveda to say that it sanctions sati do this mischief by misspelling the last word of richa X 18. 7 as "yomiagne." The last word of this richa is actually "yomiagre." Thus, there is no richa in Rigveda calling for widow burning. Veda, Ramayana and Gita are the three supreme scriptures of Hindus.

Will Durant (1885–1981) American historian says: "Women enjoyed far greater freedom in the Vedic period than in later India. She had more to say in the choice of her mate than the forms of marriage might suggest. She appeared freely at feasts and dances, and joined with men in religious sacrifice. She could study, and like Gargi, engage in philosophical disputation. If she was left a widow there were no restrictions upon her remarriage."

Louis Jaccoliot (1837–1890) who worked in French India as a government official and was at one time President of the Court in Chandranagar, translated numerous Vedic hymns and the celebrated author of the Bible in India: Hindoo Origin of Hebrew and Christian Revelation said:

"India of the Vedas entertained a respect for women amounting to worship; a fact which we seem little to suspect in Europe when we accuse the extreme East of having denied the dignity of woman, and of having only made her an instrument of pleasure and of passive obedience." He also said: "What! here is a civilization, which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places the woman on a level with the man and gives her an equal place in the family and in society."

Bhishma Pitamaha also said: "The teacher who teaches true knowledge is more important than ten instructors. The father is more important than ten such teachers of true knowledge and the mother is more important than ten such fathers. There is no greater guru than mother." [9]

Sikhism

Guru Nanak (1469–1539), the founder of Sikhism, spoke against the practices mentioned above. To root out these century-old habits, the Guru spoke clearly and in simple terms to influence the masses. His writings appear in the Sikh Scriptures, which date from about 1499. He is quoted to have said:

From woman, man is born; within woman, man is conceived;
to woman he is engaged and married.
Woman becomes his friend; through woman, the future generations come.
When his woman dies, he seeks another woman; to woman he is bound.
So why call her bad? From her, kings are born.
From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all.
— Guru Nanak, Raag Aasaa Mehal 1, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 473

Further to reinforce this message of equality among the genders, the Sikh founder Guru says in the Sikh holy book Sri Guru Granth Sahib that God's light shines in both men and women thus: "In the earth and in the sky, I do not see any second. Among all the women and the men, His Light is shining. (3)" (Guru Granth Sahib page 223). To further remove the long-ingrained prejudices of the masses, Guru Nanak also says that both men and women are created by the Lord thus: "He Himself created all women and men; the Lord Himself plays every play." (Guru Granth Sahib page 304) and again "Women and men, all the men and women, all came from the One Primal Lord God." (Guru Granth Sahib page 983). Furthermore, to make sure that people of both the Muslim and Hindu religions were listening, Bhagat Kabir say this: "You fashioned all these men and women, Lord. All these are Your Forms. Kabeer is the child of God, Allah, Raam. All the Gurus and prophets are mine. ||5||" (Guru Granth Sahib page 1349), mentioning that "God", Allah (the Muslim name for God) and Raam (the Hindu name for God) are all honoured.
**Islamic law**

In the early Middle Ages, an early effort to improve the status of women occurred during the early reforms under Islam, when women were given greater rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance.\[^{10}\] Women were not accorded with such legal status in other cultures, including the West, until centuries later.\[^{11}\] *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* states that the general improvement of the status of Arab women included prohibition of female infanticide and recognizing women's full personhood.\[^{12}\] "The dowry, previously regarded as a bride-price paid to the father, became a nuptial gift retained by the wife as part of her personal property."\[^{10}\] Under Islamic law, marriage was no longer viewed as a "status" but rather as a "contract", in which the woman's consent was imperative.\[^{10}\] \[^{12}\] \[^{13}\]

"Women were given inheritance rights in a patriarchal society that had previously restricted inheritance to male relatives."\[^{10}\] Annemarie Schimmel states that "compared to the pre-Islamic position of women, Islamic legislation meant an enormous progress; the woman has the right, at least according to the letter of the law, to administer the wealth she has brought into the family or has earned by her own work."\[^{14}\] Some have claimed that women generally had more legal rights under Islamic law than they did under Western legal systems until more recent times.\[^{15}\]

English Common Law transferred property held by a wife at the time of a marriage to her husband, which contrasted with the Sura: "Unto men (of the family) belongs a share of that which Parents and near kindred leave, and unto women a share of that which parents and near kindred leave, whether it be a little or much - a determinate share" (Quran 4:7), albeit maintaining that husbands were solely responsible for the maintenance and leadership of his wife and family.\[^{15}\] "French married women, unlike their Muslim sisters, suffered from restrictions on their legal capacity which were removed only in 1965."\[^{16}\]

**Education**

Women in Islam played an important role in the foundations of many Islamic educational institutions, such as Fatima al-Fihri's founding of the University of Al Karauine in 859. This continued through to the Ayyubid dynasty in the 12th and 13th centuries, when 160 mosques and madrasahs were established in Damascus, 26 of which were funded by women through the Waqf (charitable trust or trust law) system. Half of all the royal patrons for these institutions were also women.\[^{17}\] According to the Sunni scholar Ibn Asakir in the 12th century, there were opportunities for female education in the medieval Islamic world, writing that women could study, earn *ijazahs* (academic degrees), and qualify as scholars and teachers. This was especially the case for learned and scholarly families, who wanted to ensure the highest possible education for both their sons and daughters.\[^{18}\] Ibn Asakir had himself studied under 80 different female teachers in his time. Female education in the Islamic world was inspired by Muhammad's wives: Khadijah, a successful businesswoman, and Aisha, a renowned hadith scholar and military leader. According to a hadith attributed to Muhammad, he praised the women of Medina because of their desire for religious knowledge.\[^{19}\]

"How splendid were the women of the *ansar*; shame did not prevent them from becoming learned in the faith."

While it was not common for women to enroll as students in formal classes, it was common for women to attend informal lectures and study sessions at mosques, madrasahs and other public places. While there were no legal restrictions on female education, some men did not approve of this practice, such as Muhammad ibn al-Hajj (d. 1336) who was appalled at the behaviour of some women who informally audited lectures in his time:\[^{20}\]

"[Consider] what some women do when people gather with a shaykh to hear [the recitation of] books. At that point women come, too, to hear the readings; the men sit in one place, the women facing them. It even happens at such times that some of the women are carried away by the situation; one will stand up, and sit down, and shout in a loud voice. [Moreover,] her 'awra will appear; in her house, their exposure would be forbidden — how can it be allowed in a mosque, in the presence of men?"
Legal rights of women in history

Employment

The labor force in the Caliphate were employed from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, while both men and women were involved in diverse occupations and economic activities. Women were employed in a wide range of commercial activities and diverse occupations in the primary sector (as farmers for example), secondary sector (as construction workers, dyers, spinners, etc.) and tertiary sector (as investors, doctors, nurses, presidents of guilds, brokers, peddlers, lenders, scholars, etc.). Muslim women also held a monopoly over certain branches of the textile industry, the largest and most specialized and market-oriented industry at the time, in occupations such as spinning, dyeing, and embroidery. In comparison, female property rights and wage labour were relatively uncommon in Europe until the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Scandinavia

The early law of the northern parts of Europe is interesting from the different ways in which it treated women. The position of women varied greatly. Sometimes they could inherit when there were no males in their generation, and sometimes they could only inherit certain types of property. Sometimes women could not inherit, themselves, but passed the right of inheritance to their sons.

Salic law provided the basis for most of these customs and laws. The idea was that the proper way of providing for a woman was by giving her a marriage portion. But, once she is married into a separate community, neither she nor her children are deemed to have any further claim on the parent group.

Among the Scandinavian races women were under perpetual tutelage, whether married or unmarried. As late as the code of Christian V, at the end of the 17th century, it was enacted that if a woman married without the consent of her tutor he might have, if he wished, administration of her goods during her life. The provision made by the Scandinavian laws under the name of morning-gift was perhaps the parent of the modern settled property.

The British Isles

Ireland

The Brehon law of Ireland excepted women from the ordinary course of the law. They could distrain or contract only in certain named cases, and distress upon their property was regulated by special rules. In general, every woman had to have a male guardian. One exception occurred if an heiress married a landless man from another tribe: in that case the normal relationship was reversed and the wife was the guardian.

England

The laws of Athelstan contained a peculiarly brutal provision for the punishment of a female slave convicted of theft: She was to be burned alive by eighty other female slaves. Other laws were directed against the practice of witchcraft by women. Burning was the punishment specially appropriated to women convicted of treason or witchcraft. A case of sentence to execution by burning for treason occurred as late as 1784.

Monogamy was enforced both by the civil and ecclesiastical law. Second and third marriages involved penance. A glimpse of cruelty in the household is afforded by the provision, occurring no less than three times in the ecclesiastical legislation, that if a woman scourged her female slave to death, she must do penance.

Traces of wife-purchase were still seen in the law of Æthelberht of Kent, which stated that if a man carried off a freeman's wife, he must, at his own expense, procure another wife for the husband. (See also bride kidnapping.) The codes contain few provisions as to the property of married women, but those few appear to prove that they were in a better position than at later dates.

The development of the bride price no doubt was in the same direction. It was the sum paid by the husband to the wife's family for the purchase of part of the family property, while the morning-gift was paid to the bride herself.
its English form, morning-gift occurs in the laws of Canute; in its Latinized form of morgangiva, it occurs in the Leges Henrici Primi.

The old common and statute law of England placed women in a special position. A woman was exempt from legal duties more particularly attaching to men and not performable by a deputy. She could not hold a proper feud, i.e., one of which the tenure was by military service. The same principle appears in the rule that she could not be endowed of a castle maintained for the defense of the realm and not for the private use of the owner. She could receive homage, but not render it in the form used by men.

She could be the constable, either of a castle or a vill, but not the sheriff, except in the one case of Westmorland, where an hereditary office was exercised in the 17th century by Anne, countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery.

In certain cases a woman could transmit rights that she could not enjoy. Edward III's claim to the crown of France rested on such a power of transmission. However, the claim was a breach of the French constitutional law, which rejected the claim of a woman.

By Magna Carta a woman could not accuse a man of murder except of that of her husband. This disability no doubt arose from the fact that in trial by battle she naturally did not appear in person but through a champion. She was not admitted as a witness. She could not appoint a testamentary guardian, and could only be a guardian of her own children to a limited extent. Her will was revoked by marriage, that of a man only by marriage and the subsequent birth of a child.

In some old statutes, very curious sumptuary regulations as to women's dress occur. By the sumptuary laws of Edward III in 1363 (37 Edw. III, cc. 8-14), women were, in general, to be dressed according to the position of their fathers or husbands. It is worthy of notice that at the times of passing these sumptuary laws, the trade interests of women were protected by the legislature.

In some cases, the wives and daughters of tradesmen were allowed to assist in the trades of their husbands and fathers. Some trading corporations, such as the East India Company, recognized no distinction of sex in their members.

At common law a woman could own both real and personal property. However, in the case of a married woman the husband had a life interest in any real property: this continued even after the wife's death, and was known as tenancy "by the curtesy". Personal property passed into the ownership of the husband absolutely, with the exception of certain items of adornment or household use known as paraphernalia.

These rules were circumvented by the rules of equity, as enforced by the Court of Chancery. Property designed for the benefit of a married woman was vested in trustees, and her rights under that trust remained her own and did not vest in the husband.

Scotland

In Scotland, as early as Regiam Majestatem (14th century), women were the object of special legal regulation. In that work, the mercheta mulieris (probably a tax paid to the lord on the marriage of his tenant's daughter) was fixed at a sum differing according to the rank of the woman. Numerous ancient laws dealt with trade and sumptuary matters. By the Leges Quatuor Burgorum, female brewsters making bad ale were to forfeit eightpence and be put on the cucking-stool, and were to set an ale-wand outside their houses under a penalty of fourpence. The same laws also provided that a married woman committing a trespass without her husband's knowledge might be chastised like a under-age child.
Wales

The second part of the Welsh Law Codes begins with "the laws of women", such as the rules governing marriage and the division of property if a married couple should separate. The position of women under Welsh law differed significantly from that of their Norman-English contemporaries. A marriage could be established in two basic ways. The normal way was that the woman would be given to a man by her kindred; the abnormal way was that the woman could elope with a man without the consent of her kindred. In the latter case, her kindred could compel her to return if she was still a virgin, but if she was not, she could not be compelled to return. If the relationship lasted for seven years, she had the same entitlements as if she had been given by her kin.

A number of payments are connected with marriage. Amonb was a fee payable to the woman's lord on the loss of her virginity, whether on marriage or otherwise. Cowyll was a payment due to the woman from her husband on the morning after the marriage, marking her transition from virgin to married woman. Agweddi was the amount of the common pool of property owned by the couple that was due to the woman if the couple separated before the end of seven years. The total of the agweddi depended on the woman's status by birth, regardless of the actual size of the common pool of property. If the marriage broke up after the end of seven years, the woman was entitled to half the common pool.

If a woman found her husband with another woman, she was entitled to a payment of six score pence the first time and a pound the second time; on the third occasion she was entitled to divorce him. If the husband had a concubine, the wife was allowed to strike her without having to pay any compensation, even if it resulted in the concubine's death. A woman could only be beaten by her husband for three things: for giving away something that she was not entitled to give away, for being found with another man, or for wishing a blemish on her husband's beard. If he beat her for any other cause, she was entitled to the payment of sarhad. If the husband found her with another man and beat her, he was not entitled to any further compensation. Women were not allowed to inherit land, except under special circumstances, but the rule for the division of moveable property when one of a married couple died was the same for both sexes. The property was divided into two equal halves, with the surviving partner keeping one half and the dying partner being free to give bequests from the other half.

Edwardian Era Laws

In 1911, under English law, the earliest age at which a girl could contract a valid marriage was 12; boys had to be 14. Under the Infants Settlement Act 1855, a valid settlement could be made by a woman at 17 with the approval of the court, while the age for a man was 20; by the Married Women's Property Act 1907, any settlement by a husband of his wife's property was not valid unless executed by her if she was of full age, or confirmed by her after she attained full age.

An unmarried woman was liable for the support of illegitimate children till they attain the age of 16. She was generally assisted, in the absence of agreement, by an affiliation order granted by magistrates. A married woman having separate property was, under the Married Women's Property Acts 1882 and 1908, liable for the support of her parents, husband, children and grandchildren becoming chargeable to any union or parish.

In common law, the father, rather than the mother, was entitled to the custody of a legitimate child up to the age of 16, and could only forfeit such right by misconduct. But the Court of Chancery, wherever there was trust property and the infant could be made a ward of court, took a less rigid view of the paternal rights and looked more to the interest of the child, and consequently in some cases to the extension of the mother's rights in common law.

Legislation tended in the same direction. By the Custody of Infants Act 1873, the Court of Chancery was empowered to enforce a provision in a separation deed, giving up the custody or control of a child to the mother. The Judicature Act 1873 enacted that, in questions relating to the custody and education of infants, the rules of equity should prevail.
Legal rights of women in history

The most remarkable disabilities under which women were still placed in 1910 were the exclusion of female heirs from succession to real estate, except in the absence of a male heir; and the fact that a husband could obtain a divorce for the adultery of his wife, while a wife could obtain it only for her husband's adultery if coupled with some other cause, such as cruelty or desertion.

Almost all existing disabilities were lifted by the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919.

Spain and Aquitania

Women in Christian Spain and Southern France, those regions part of the Visigothic Kingdom (418–721) and its various successor states (Asturias, Leon, Castile, Navarra, Aragon, Aquitania (Occitania) and Languedoc) Visigothic Law and Roman Law combined to allow women more rights then their contemporaries would enjoy until the 20th century. Particularly with the Liber Judiciorum as codified 642/643 and expanded on in the Code of Recceswinth in 653, women could inherit land and title and manage it independently from their husbands or male relations, dispose of their property in legal wills if they had no heirs, and women could represent themselves and bear witness in court by age 14 and arrange for their own marriages by age 20.[25] In Spain these laws were further codified between 1252-1284 by Alfonso X of Castile with the Siete Partidas.

See also

• Feme covert
• Women's suffrage
• Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)
• Reproductive rights - issues regarding "reproductive freedom"
• Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
• Vindication of the Rights of Woman
• Women's right to know
• Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
• Subjection of women
• League of Women Voters
• In Defense of Women
• Parental leave
• Timeline of Womens Rights (other than voting)

Historical readings

• Alice Zimmern, Renaissance of Girls Education in England (1898);
• A. R. Cleveland, Women under English Law (1896);
• J. L. de Lanessan, L'Education de la femme moderne (1908);
• M. Ostrogorski, Femme au point de vue du droit public (1892);
• Mrs C. P. Gilman, Women and Economics (1899);
• Miss C. E. Collet, Report on Changes in the Employment of Women (1898; Parl. papers, C. 8794);
• B. and M. Van Vorst, Woman — in industry (1908);
• A. Loria, Le Feminisme au point de vue sociologique (1907);
• Helen Blackburn, Record of Women's Suffrage, in the United Kingdom (1902);
• Susan B. Anthony, History of Women's Suffrage, in the United States (4 vols., 1881–1902);
• C. C. Stopes, British Free Women (1894);
External articles

- IWRAW — International Women’s Rights Action Watch
- American Civil Liberties Union: Women’s Rights
- Amnesty International Women’s Rights
- Women’s Status and War in Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Reconsideration
- Ansar Burney Trust — working for women’s rights

References

[4] (Book: Vagambhrianiya, Author: Dr Priyamvada Vedbharti)
[11] Lindsay Jones, p.6224

Women’s Status and War in Cross-Cultural-Perspective-A-Reconsideration-World-Cultures-152-2006-209247
**Venus figurines**

*Venus figurines* is an umbrella term for a number of prehistoric statuettes of women portrayed with similar physical attributes from the Upper Palaeolithic, mostly found in Europe, but with finds as far east as Irkutsk Oblast, Siberia, extending their distribution to much of Eurasia, from the Pyrenees to Lake Baikal. Most of them date to the Gravettian period, but there are a number of early examples from the Aurignacian, including the Venus of Hohle Fels, discovered in 2008, carbon dated to at least 35,000 years ago, and late examples of the Magdalenian, such as the Venus of Monruz, aged about 11,000 years.

These figurines were carved from soft stone (such as steatite, calcite or limestone), bone or ivory, or formed of clay and fired. The latter are among the oldest ceramics known. In total, over a hundred such figurines are known; virtually all of modest size, between 4 cm and 25 cm in height.

**History of discovery**

The first Upper Paleolithic representation of a woman was discovered about 1864 by the Marquis de Vibraye, at Laugerie-Basse (Dordogne), where initial archaeological surveys had already been undertaken; Vibraye named his find the *Vénus impudique*, a knowing contrast to the "modest" *Venus Pudica* Hellenistic type, the most famous of which is the Medici Venus. The Magdalenian "Venus" from Laugerie-Basse is headless, footless, armless but with a strongly incised vaginal opening. Another example of such a figure being discovered and recognised was the Venus of Brasempouy, found by Édouard Piette in 1894 (but not originally labelled as a "Venus"). Four years later, Salomon Reinach published a group of steatite figurines from the caves of Balzi Rossi. The famous Venus of Willendorf was excavated in 1908 in a loess
Venus figurines
deposit in the Danube valley, Austria. Since then, hundreds of similar figurines have been discovered from the Pyrenees to the plains of Siberia. They are collectively described as "Venus" figurines in reference to the Roman goddess of beauty, Venus, since the prehistorians of the early 20th century assumed they represented an ancient ideal of beauty. Early discourse on "Venus" figurines was preoccupied with identifying the race being represented; and the steatopygous fascination of Sartje Baartman, the "Hottentot Venus" exhibited as a living ethnographic curiosity to connoisseurs in Paris early in the nineteenth century.¹²

In September 2008, archaeologists from the University of Tübingen discovered a 6 cm figurine woman carved from a mammoth's tusk, the Venus of Hohle Fels, dated to at least 35,000 years ago, representing the earliest known sculpture of this type, and the earliest known work of figurative art altogether. The ivory carving, found in six fragments in Germany's Hohle Fels cave, represents the typical features of Venus figurines, including the swollen belly, wide-set thighs, and large breasts.³

**Description**

The majority of the Venus figurines appear to be depictions of females that follow certain artistic conventions, on the lines of schematisation and stylisation. Most of them are roughly lozenge-shaped, with two tapering terminals at top (head) and bottom (legs) and the widest point in the middle (hips/belly). In some examples, certain parts of the human anatomy are exaggerated: abdomen, hips, breasts, thighs, vulva. In contrast, other anatomical details are neglected or absent, especially arms and feet. The heads are often of relatively small size and devoid of detail.

The question of the steatopygia of some of the figurines has led to numerous controversies. The issue was first raised by Édouard Piette, excavator of the Brassempouy figure and of several other examples from the Pyrenees. Some authors saw this feature as the depiction of an actual physical property, resembling the Khoisan tribe of southern Africa, while others interpreted it as a symbol of fertility and abundance. Recently, similar figurines with protruding buttocks from the prehistoric Jōmon period Japan were also interpreted as steatopygia of local women, possibly under nutritional stress.⁴

The Venus of Willendorf and the Venus of Laussel bear traces of having been externally covered in red ochre. The significance of this is not clear, but is normally assumed to be religious or ritual in nature—perhaps symbolic of the blood of menstruation or childbirth.

All generally accepted Paleolithic female figurines are from the Upper Palaeolithic. Although they were originally mostly considered Aurignacian, the majority is now associated with the Gravettian and Solutrean. In these periods, the more rotund figurines are predominant. During the Magdalenian, the forms become finer with more detail; conventional stylization also develops.

**Notable specimens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>age (kya, approx.)</th>
<th>location</th>
<th>material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venus of Hohle Fels</td>
<td>35–40</td>
<td>Swabian Alb, Germany</td>
<td>mammoth ivory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus of Galgenberg</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower Austria</td>
<td>serpentine rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus of Dolní Věstonice</td>
<td>27–31</td>
<td>Moravia, Czech Republic</td>
<td>ceramic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus of Lespugue</td>
<td>24–26</td>
<td>French Pyrenees</td>
<td>ivory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus of Willendorf</td>
<td>24–26</td>
<td>Lower Austria</td>
<td>limestone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus of Małta</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Irkutsk Oblast, Russia</td>
<td>ivory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus of Moravany</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Záhorie, Slovakia</td>
<td>mammoth ivory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus of Brassempouy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Aquitaine, France</td>
<td>ivory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classification

A number of attempts to subdivide or classify the figurines have been made. One of the less controversial is that by Henri Delporte, simply based on geographic provenance.\(^5\) He distinguishes:

• the Venus figurines of the Pyrenees-Aquitaine group (Venus of Lespugue, of Laussel and of Brassempouy)
• the Venus figurines of the Mediterranean group (Venus of Savignano, Malta and of Balzi Rossi)
• the Venus figurines of the Rhine-Danube group (Venus of Willendorf and of Dolní Věstonice)
• the Venus figurines of the Russian group (Kostienki and Zaraysk\(^6\)\(^7\) in Russia and Gagarino in Ukraine)
• the Venus figurines of the Siberian group (Mal'ta Venus, Bouret' Venus).

Venus figurines are also found elsewhere in the world, for example Japan\(^8\), China\(^9\).

According to André Leroi-Gourhan, there are cultural connections between all these groups. He states that certain anatomical details suggest a shared Oriental origin, followed by a westward diffusion.\(^10\)

The absence of such figurines from the Iberian peninsula is curious. Only few and rather dubious examples have been reported, especially at El Pendo and La Pileta. The so-called Venus of Las Caldas from a cave near Oviedo is a Magdalenian antler carving. Although some scholars see it as a stylised female body with an animal head, it is probably a decorated atlatl-type device.

Interpretation

There are many interpretations of the figurines, often based on little argument or fact. Like many prehistoric artifacts, the cultural meaning of these figures may never be known. Archaeologists speculate, however, that they may be emblems of security and success, fertility icons, pornographic imagery, or even direct representations of a Great Goddess or Mother Goddess or various local goddesses. The female figures, as part of Upper Palaeolithic portable art, appear to have no practical use in the context of subsistence. They are mostly discovered in settlement contexts, both in open-air sites and caves; burial contexts are much more rare.

At Gagarino in Russia, seven Venus figurines were found in a hut of 5 m diameter; they have been interpreted as apotropaic amulets, connected with the occupants of the dwelling. At Mal'ta, near Lake Baikal, figurines are only known from the left sides of huts. The figurines were probably not hidden or secret amulets, but rather were displayed to be seen by all (a factor that may explain their wide geographic spread).

The apparent obesity of the figures strongly implies a focus on fertility as, at the time of their construction, human society had not yet invented farming and did not have ready access to rich or plentiful foodstuffs. An image of excess weight may have symbolized a yearning for plenty and security. Nevertheless, the widespread theories concerning a possible fertility cult or a Mother Goddess are entirely speculative and cannot be scientifically evaluated.

Recently, two very ancient stone objects (between 200,000 and 300,000 years old) have been interpreted as attempts at representing females. One, the Venus of Berekhat Ram, was discovered on the Golan Heights; the other, the Venus of Tan-Tan, in Morocco. Both pieces remain controversial. In any case, both are at best very cursorily and marginally carved, at worst simply natural, their anthropomorphic appearance being coincidence.

Some scholars and popular theorists suggest a direct continuity between the Palaeolithic female figurines and later examples of female depictions from the Neolithic or even the Bronze Age.\(^11\) Such views have been contested on numerous grounds, not least the general absence of such depictions during the intervening Mesolithic.
See also

- Mother Goddess
- Figurine
- Pre-historic art
- Çatalhöyük

Gallery
Venus figurines

Mal'ta Venus

Venus of Savignano

Stylised Venus of Bouret

Venus of Savignano

Venus of Karanovo

Venus of Malta (Archaeological Museum of Valletta)

Bibliography


  *This article incorporates information from paléolithique this version* [12] *of the equivalent article on the French Wikipedia.*
External links

- Venus figurines and other portable Ice Age Art[13], with Dr Jill Cook, Curator of European Prehistory, British Museum
- Christopher Witcombe, "Analysis of the Venus of Willendorf"[14]
- (Canadian Museum of Civilization) The Balzi Rossi Figurines[15]
- Venus figures from the Stone Age[16]
- Images of women in ancient art[17]

References

[2] Of the mammoth-ivory figurine fragment known as La Poire ("the pear") from her massive thighs, Randall White (White 2006:263, caption to fig. 6) observed the connection.
[6] Hizri Amirkhanov and Sergey Lev. New finds of art objects from the Upper Palaeolithic site of Zaraysk, Russia (http://antiquity.ac.uk/ant/082/ant0820862.htm)
Women in Church history

Women in Church history were forbidden to occupy any significant ecclesiastical role and were confined to the status of wife, mother and daughter. This social situation was often paralleled in secular legislation, which provided incentives for women to stay in the home and obey their husbands.

Apostolic age

New Testament written by men

From the very beginning of the early Christian church, women were important members of the movement, although much of the information in the New Testament on the work of women has been overlooked. Since sources of information stemming from the New Testament church was written and interpreted by men, many assumed that it had been a "man's church." Recently, scholars have begun looking in mosaics, frescoes, and inscriptions of that period for information about women's roles in the early church.

Assemblies in the homes of believers

As time went on, groups of Christians organized within the homes of believers. Those who could offer their home for meetings were considered important within the movement and assumed leadership roles. The New Testament Gospels acknowledge that women were among Jesus' earliest followers. Jewish women disciples, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, had accompanied Jesus during his ministry and supported him out of their private means. Although the details of these gospel stories may be questioned, in general they reflect the prominent historical roles women played in Jesus' ministry as disciples. There were women disciples present at Jesus' crucifixion. Women were reported to be the first witnesses to the resurrection, chief among them again Mary Magdalene. She was not only "witness," but also called a "messenger" of the risen Christ.

Numerous women in early congregations

Historians generally agree that women had a major role in the creation of the church. In the first generation of Christianity they had a more decisive and prominent role than they did in later centuries. Some researchers conclude that women comprised the majority in early Christian congregations. Evidence includes disparaging comments made by ancient writers labeling the new religion as a "woman's religion," and inventories of women's clothing found in the ruins of early Christian meeting places.

This large female membership likely stemmed in part from the early church's informal and flexible organization offering significant roles to women. Another factor is that there appeared to be no division between clergy and laity. Leadership was shared among male and female members according to their "gifts" and talents. But even more important than church organization was the way in which the Gospel tradition and the Gospels themselves, along with the writing of Paul, could be interpreted as moving women beyond silence and subordination.
**Patristic age**

**Ministry restricted to men**

From the early patristic age, the offices of teacher and sacramental minister were reserved for men throughout most of the church in the East and West.\[^6\]

**Tertullian on the role of women**

Tertullian, the second century Latin father, wrote that "It is not permitted to a woman to speak in church. Neither may she teach, baptize, offer, nor claim for herself any function proper to a man, least of all the sacerdotal office" ("On the Veiling of Virgins"[^7]). Tertullian's views on women went further: "The curse God pronounced on your sex still weighs on the world. …You are the devil's gateway…. You are the first that deserted the divine laws. All too easily you destroyed the image of God, Adam. Because you deserved death, it was the son of God who had to die."[^8]

**Middle ages**

**Low Middle Ages**

The Roman Catholic Church was the major unifying cultural influence of the Middle Ages with its selection from Latin learning, preservation of the art of writing, and a centralized administration through its network of bishops.

**High Middle Ages**

A major spokesman for the Church in the High Middle Ages (11th through 13th centuries) was Thomas Aquinas[^9], one of the 33 Doctors of the Roman Catholic Church and renowned thirteenth-century theologian. Writings of Thomas Aquinas about women were an opposing influence upon church and philosophical attitudes towards women for centuries.[^10]

**Reformation and Baroque period**

The Protestant Reformation, by shutting down female convents within the movement, effectively closed off the option of a full-time religious role for Protestant women.[^11] Martin Luther himself taught that "the wife should stay at home and look after the affairs of the household as one who has been deprived of the ability of administering those affairs that are outside and concern the state…."[^12] John Calvin agreed that "the woman's place is in the home."[^13]

**Victorian era**

The status of women in the Victorian era is often seen as an illustration of the striking discrepancy between England's national power and wealth and what many, then and now, consider its appalling social conditions
Women in Church history

Women in the Middle Ages

Women in the Middle Ages were historically influenced by the cultural and religious predominance of the Roman Catholic Church, which emphasized a wife's obedience to her husband and the exclusion of women from significant ecclesiastical responsibilities.

Early Middle Ages

Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church was the major unifying cultural influence of the Middle Ages with its selection from Latin learning, preservation of the art of writing, and a centralized administration through its network of bishops.

Historically in the Catholic and other ancient churches, including the Coptic Church, and the Eastern Orthodox Church, the priesthood and the ministries dependent upon it such as Bishop, Patriarch and Pope, were restricted to men. This was ostensibly because the priest when performing the Eucharist stands in representation of Jesus, and because Jesus himself scripturally selected only male Apostles to lead the Church.

Limited ecclesial roles

Women were allowed to be Deaconesses in the early church. However, the first Council of Orange (441) forbade the ordination of women to the diaconate, a ruling that was repeated by the Council of Épagon (517) and second Council of Orléans (533).[1]

These councils are seen by some as evidence that the ministry of women was actively suppressed during the early Middle Ages.[2] With the establishment of Christian monasticism, other influential roles became available to women. From the 5th century onward, Christian convents provided opportunities for some women to escape the path of marriage and child-rearing, acquire literacy and learning, and play a more active religious role.

Abbesses could become important figures in their own right, often ruling over monasteries of both men and women, and holding significant lands and power. Figures such as Hilda of Whitby and Hildegard of Bingen became influential figures on a national and even international scale.

References

[4] Blevins
[12] Luther, Martin. Lectures on Genesis 3:11.

Women in the Middle Ages
**High Middle Ages**

Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204) was one of the wealthiest and most powerful women in Western Europe during the High Middle Ages. She was the patroness of such literary figures as Wace, Benoît de Sainte-More, and Chrétien de Troyes. Eleanor succeeded her father as *suo jure* Duchess of Aquitaine and Countess of Poitiers at the age of fifteen, and thus became the most eligible bride in Europe.

Regarding apostolic duties, Pope Innocent III stated: "No matter whether the most blessed Virgin Mary stands higher, and is also more illustrious, than all the apostles together, it was still not to her, but to them, that the Lord entrusted the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven".[3]

**Late Middle Ages**

In the later Middle Ages women such as Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Teresa of Avila, played significant roles in the development of theological ideas and discussion within the church, and were later declared Doctors of the Roman Catholic Church.

**References**

[3] Epistle, 11 December 1210

**Women in the patristic age**

The status of women in the patristic age, as defined by the Church Fathers, is a contentious issue within Christianity, due to the fact that the patristic writers clearly sought to restrict the influence of women in civil society as well as in the life of the Church.

The patristic era, which extends roughly from 150 AD to 500 AD, was arguably harsher than the Middle Ages themselves in attributing social roles to women, hence the expression *patriarchy* used by modern-day feminists.

**Anthropological perspectives**

**Aristotle’s views on women**

Aristotle believed that women are colder than men and thus a lower form of life.[1] His assumption carried forward unexamined to Galen and others for almost two thousand years until the sixteenth century.[2]

**Male activity and female passivity**

In the classical age, which shaped patristic views, male sexuality and power were closely associated, and female sexuality was associated with passivity. Church Fathers opposed to practice of independent female ascetism due to the fact that it threatened to emancipate women from men. To take one's pleasure was to be virile, to accept it servile. [3]
Limited ecclesiastical roles

Ministry restricted to men

From the early patristic age, the offices of teacher and sacramental minister were reserved for men throughout most of the church in the East and West. Tertullian, the second century Latin father, wrote that "It is not permitted to a woman to speak in church. Similarly, the fourth century theologian Epiphanius of Salamis claimed that "Never from the beginning of the world has a woman served God as priest". Diaconate reserved to men

In early centuries, the Eastern church allowed women to participate to a limited extent in ecclesiastical office by ordaining deaconesses, whereas in the West the diaconate (as with higher offices) was reserved only for men. Neither may she teach, baptize, offer, nor claim for herself any function proper to a man, least of all the sacerdotal office, according to Tertullian. (On the Veiling of Virgins)

Image of women as seen by theologians

Woman as the root of all evil

Tertullian's views on women went further: "The curse God pronounced on your sex still weighs on the world. ... You are the devil's gateway.... You are the first that deserted the divine laws. All too easily you destroyed the image of God, Adam. Because you deserved death, it was the son of God who had to die".

St Jerome, the well known Biblical scholar and translator of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate) have a simple view of women. To him "woman is the root of all evil." Like all the early Christian theologians, Jerome glorified virginity and looked down on marriage. He reasoning, was also rooted in Genesis: "Eve in paradise was a virgin ... understand that virginity is natural and that marriage comes after the Fall."

Firmilian tells of a woman who went into an ecstasy and came out a prophetess. "That woman who first through marvels or deceptions of the demons did many things to deceive the faithful, among other things... she dared to do this, namely that by an impressive invocation she feigned she was sanctifying bread, and offering a sacrifice to the Lord."

Women as the weaker sex

John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople at the beginning of the fifth century, said of biblical women that they "were great characters, great women and admirable.... Yet did they in no case outstrip the men, but occupied the second rank" (Epistle to the Ephesians, Homily 13). Commenting on 1 Timothy 2:11-15, Chrysostom said that "the male sex enjoyed the higher honor. Man was first formed; and elsewhere he shows their superiority.... He wishes the man to have the preeminence in every way." Of women he said that "The woman taught once, and ruined all. On this account therefore he saith, let her not teach. But what is it to other women, that she suffered this? It certainly concerns them; for the sex is weak and fickle, and he is speaking of the sex collectively." (1 Timothy, Homily 9).

Augustine elevated the contempt of women and sex to a level unsurpassed before. To him, women's inferiority to men was so obvious that he felt that he had to ask the question: "Why was woman created at all". He concluded that woman was created purely for procreation and for nothing else. The expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise, according to him, was purely the fault of Eve.

---

[1] Tertullian, Against heresies
[2] Epiphanius of Salamis, Against heresies
[4] Firmilian
[5] St Jerome
[7] 1 Timothy
[8] Chrysostom
[9] Augustine
[10] 1 Timothy
[12] John Chrysostom
[13] Augustine
[14] Augustine
[15] Augustine
Women as creatures of lust

Gregory of Nazianzus, the Bishop of Constantinople had this to say about women, "Fierce is the dragon and cunning the asp; But and cunning the asp; But woman have the malice of both."

According to the theologian Origen, women are worse than animals because they are continuously full of lust. Origen does not approve of the sexual act even in marriage and taught that although widowers can remarry, they are by no means crowned for this. He also argued in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 that female prophets never spoke publicly in the assembly.

St. Clement of Alexandria had such a contempt for women that he believed such a feeling must be universal. He wrote, in his book Paedagogus that in women, "the consciousness of their own nature must evoke feelings of shame". He also suggested that women should also fetch from the pantry things that we need.

Gregory of Nyssa taught that the sexual act was an outcome of the fall and that marriage is the outcome of sin.

Specific prohibitions against female demands

Divorce

Women who have left their husbands for no prior cause and have joined themselves with others, may not even at death receive communion.

Adultery

A woman of the faith who has left an adulterous husband of the faith and marries another, her marrying in this manner is prohibited. If she has so married, she may not at any more receive communion--unless he that she has left has since departed from this world.

Abortion

If a woman conceives in adultery and then has an abortion, she may not commune again, even as death approaches, because she has sinned twice.

Infanticide

Justin Martyr cautioned that it was wicked to expose children, given that almost all those who are exposed were raised to prostitution.

Prostitution

Justin also added a warning against consorting with prostitutes because it was thereby possible that one would be guilty of having intercourse with his own child.

Women in heretical movements

A number of minority movements, deemed heretical by the wider church, gave a more prominent place to the ministry of women and in some cases allowed them to participate in the priestly ministry. These include Montanism in the second and third century, the Quintillians and Collyridians in the fourth century, and Priscillianism in the fourth century. These heretical sects provided occasion for the institutional church to condemn the ecclesiastical ministry of women.
References


[5] Tertullian, "On Women's Clothing", 1:1


[7] Knight, Honest to Man: p120

[8] In Epistle 75. 1-5 to Cyprian,


[14] Ibid: p77

[15] Ibid: p185

[16] Ranke-Heinemann, Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven: p51-52


[21] Canon 8 of the council of Elvira

[22] Canon 9 of the council of Elvira

[23] Canon 63 of the council of Elvira


Women's History Month

Women's History Month is an annual declared month in the United States that highlights contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. March has been set aside as this month. In India, this month is celebrated in October and corresponds with the celebration of Persons Day, which is October 18.

History

The event traces its beginnings to the first International Women's Day in 1911.

In 1979, the school district of Sonoma, California, participated in Women's History Week, an event designed around the week of March 8 (International Women's Day).

In 1981, responding to the growing popularity of the event, Congress passed a resolution recognizing Women's History Week. This week was well received, and soon after, schools across the country began to have their own local celebrations. The next year, leaders from the California group shared their project at the Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College. Other participants not only became determined to begin their own local Women's History Week projects, but also agreed to support an effort to have Congress declare a national Women's History Month.

Maryland, Pennsylvania, Alaska, New York, Oregon and other states developed and distributed curriculum materials in all of their public schools, which prompted educational events such as essay contests. Within a few years, thousands of schools and communities got on the bandwagon of National Women's History Week. They planned engaging and stimulating programs about women's roles in history and society, with support and encouragement from governors, city councils, school boards, and the U.S. Congress.

In 1987 Congress expanded the focus to a whole month. In 2001, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-Maryland) co-sponsored the first Joint Congressional Resolution proclaiming a "Women's History Month". Soon, other state departments of education began to encourage celebrations of National Women's History Week as a way to promote equality among the sexes in the classroom.

Recent impact

The popularity of women's history celebrations continues to spread as more people are becoming aware of the contributions of women and girls. A President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in History in America recently sponsored hearings in many parts of the country. The Women's Progress Commission will soon conduct hearings to promote interest in preserving areas that are relevant in American women's history. Some of the groups promoting this interest are state historical societies, women's organizations, and groups such as the Girl Scouts of the USA.
2010 Theme

The theme of National Women's History Month for the year 2010 is **Writing Women Back into History.**

External links

- NAMD Women's History Month celebration with Tech Guru, JC Lamkin[^1]
- National Black MBA Association - Philadelphia Chapter's Women's History Month celebration with African American Woman Business owner, JC Lamkin[^2]

References


Nietzsche's views on women

Nietzsche's views on women have attracted controversy, beginning during his life and continuing to the present. He frequently made remarks in his writing that some view as misogynistic.

Attitudes in public and in private

Ida von Miaskowski remarked in her memoir, published 7 years after his death:

> In the eighties, when Nietzsche's later writings containing some of the oft-quoted sharp words against women appeared, my husband sometimes told me jokingly not to tell people of my friendly relations with Nietzsche, since this was not very flattering for me. It was just a joke. My husband, like myself, always kept friendly memories of Nietzsche [...] his behavior precisely towards women was so sensitive, so natural and comradely, that even today in old age I cannot regard Nietzsche as a despiser of women.[^1]

Negative remarks in his writings

Nietzsche frequently made remarks in his writing that some view as misogynistic. A few of the characteristic examples include:

- Woman's love involves injustice and blindness against everything that she does not love... Woman is not yet capable of friendship: women are still cats and birds. Or at best cows... (Thus Spoke Zarathustra - On the Friend)

- [E]verything about woman has one solution: pregnancy... Man should be educated for war, and woman for the recreation of the warrior; all else is folly... Let woman be a plaything... The happiness of man is: I will. The happiness of woman is: he wills... You are going to woman? Do not forget the whip! (Thus Spoke Zarathustra - On Little Old and Young Women)

- Finally: woman! One-half of mankind is weak, typically sick, changeable, inconstant... she needs a religion of weakness that glorifies being weak, loving, and being humble as divine: or better, she makes the strong weak--she rules when she succeeds in overcoming the strong... Woman has always conspired with the types of decadence, the priests, against the "powerful", the "strong", the men-- (The Will to Power - 864)
Possible influence from Aristotle

Scholars of Aristotle have drawn comparisons between Nietzsche's views on women and Aristotle's views on women. They have argued that Nietzsche may have borrowed much of his political philosophy from the latter.[2]

Problems for feminist interpretations of Nietzsche

As K. Oliver and M. Pearsall remark in a review of feminist interpretations of Nietzsche's work, "Feminists have a varied relationship to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. His sharp, dramatic, and often ironic style make it difficult for women reading his texts to ignore his frequent polemical references to women". The authors note that until recently Nietzsche scholars tended to ignore his comments on women as unfortunate products of his time, and characterized them as having no real bearing on his philosophy. However, in the last twenty years this has changed dramatically, and "Today it takes an act of willed ignorance to analyze any one of Nietzsche's texts without confronting the question of the role of woman or femininity therein.

Impact of Nietzsche's anthropology

Some philosophers have even suggested that Nietzsche's philosophy cannot be understood or analyzed apart from his remarks on women. They discuss the fact that Nietzsche's work has been useful in the development of some feminist theory but ultimately conclude "While Nietzsche challenges traditional hierarchies between mind and body, reason and irrationality, nature and culture, truth and fiction - hierarchies that have been used to degrade and exclude women - his remarks about women and his use of feminine and maternal metaphors throughout his writings confound attempts simply to proclaim Nietzsche a champion of feminism or women."[3]

Relationship with Salomé

Lou Andreas-Salomé, who knew Nietzsche very well, and claimed that he had proposed to her (according to her, she refused him) claimed there was something feminine in Nietzsche's "spiritual nature", and that he had considered genius to be a feminine genius.[4] Some of Andreas-Salomé's statements about Nietzsche have been called into question.

Apparent misogyny as rhetorical strategy

Frances Nesbitt Oppel interprets Nietzsche's attitude towards women as part of a rhetorical strategy.

...Nietzsche's apparent misogyny is part of his overall strategy to demonstrate that our attitudes toward sex-gender are thoroughly cultural, are often destructive of our own potential as individuals and as a species, and may be changed. What looks like misogyny may be understood as part of a larger strategy whereby "woman-as-such" (the universal essence of woman with timeless character traits) is shown to be a product of male desire, a construct.[5]

Not advocating a model for others

Others exhibit a less tolerant sophistication, though some recognize that Nietzsche made these remarks from a consciously relative position, and while they show little patience for his remarks overall they recognize that however odious his individual opinion of women may have been, he was not advocating it as a model for others. "Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer a prominent hater of women, at least relativizes his savage statements about woman-as-such."[6] One of Nietzsche's own statements is cited in support of this assertion:

"Whenever a cardinal problem is at stake, there speaks an unchangeable "this is I"; about man and woman, for example, a thinker cannot relearn but only finish learning—only discover ultimately how this is "settled in him." At times we find certain solutions of problems that inspire strong faith in us; some
call them henceforth their "convictions." Later—we see them only as steps to self-knowledge, signposts to the problem we are—rather, to the great stupidity we are, to our spiritual *fatum*, to what is *unteachable* very "deep down". After this abundant civility that I have just evidenced in relation to myself I shall perhaps be permitted more readily to state a few truths about "woman as such"—assuming that it is now known from the outset how very much these are after all only—my truths." (BGE, 7, 231)

**Psychological digs and constructions**

Another author takes up this same quote, recognizing that "[a]lthough Nietzsche as generously as ever saves his commentators the labor of interpretation the problem recurs precisely because of the nature of what he proceeds to call his truths." But instead of focusing on putative misogyny she opines:

Much more [...] must be thought to affect everything Nietzsche writes about woman. Rather than mere psychological digs and constructions, rather than a simple expression of his own misogyny, Nietzsche's philosophic expression of the nature of woman reflects and repeats the possibilities of the affirmation or denial of illusion. This is Nietzsche's understanding of truth, and to this extent Nietzsche was able to exploit his own misogyny, in style, tracing the Platonic metaphor as such. [7]

**Abuse of women as self-evident truth**

But such views do not (except perhaps in France) reflect the mainstream perception of Nietzsche's attitudes towards women and femininity. Bertrand Russell expressed his feelings about Nietzsche in no uncertain terms, "The whole of his abuse of women is offered as self-evident truth; it is not backed up by evidence from history or from his own experience, which, so far as women were concerned, was almost confined to his sister". Russell wrote these remarks during World War II, a period that was the nadir of Nietzsche's reputation in the English speaking world due to the purported influence of his philosophy on the Nazi regime. Nietzsche was in fact brought up in a house full of women (his mother, his sister, and his two unmarried aunts), had many female friends and had voluminous correspondence with them. Russell went on to speculate that "nine women out of ten would get the whip away from him, and he knew it, so he kept away from women, and soothed his wounded vanity with unkind remarks." [8]

**Women as source of all folly and unreason**

Emphasis on the literal meaning of Nietzsche's words, followed by emotional reactions like Russell's are characteristic of much of the literature. As Leonard Lawlor and Zeynep Direk point out, "What Nietzsche says—and repeats with hysterical insistence—is that woman is the source of all folly and unreason, the siren figure who lures the male philosopher out of his appointed truth-seeking path." [9] Given the controversy regarding his attitudes towards women, precisely what Nietzsche *means* must be left to the individual reader to decide.
Aristotle's views on women

Aristotle's views on women is an important topic in women's history, largely because of the Greek philosopher's influence on later Western thinkers, who quoted him as an authority until the end of the Middle Ages. He has accordingly been criticised by feminists as a significant historical ideologue of patriarchy, sexism and inequality.

Female biology

Women held to be colder than men
Aristotle believed that women are colder than men and thus a lower form of life.\(^\text{[1]}\)

Females not fully human
He also believed that females could not be fully human.\(^\text{[2]}\) His analysis of procreation presupposes an active, ensouling masculine element bringing life to an inert, passive, lumpen female element.\(^\text{[3]}\)

Women are like infertile men
A woman's inability to produce semen is her deficiency. A woman, Aristotle declares, is as it were an infertile male.\(^\text{[4]}\). A male is male in virtue of a particular ability, and a female in virtue of a particular inability.\(^\text{[5]}\)\(^\text{[6]}\)

Women more emotional than men
According to Aristotle, woman is more compassionate than man, more easily moved to tears, while at the same time being more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold and to strike. She is more prone to despondency and less hopeful than the man, more void of shame or self-respect, more false of speech, more deceptive, and of more retentive memory.\(^\text{[7]}\)
Female role in society

Women belong in the home
After having demonstrated that women are physically inferior to men, he goes on to claim that their proper place is in the home, controlled by their husbands, because this corresponds to Greek constitutional law.[8]

Man rules by nature as well as by nurture
According to Aristotle, man rightly takes charge over woman, because he commands superior intelligence. This will also profit the women who depend on him. He compares this to the relationship between human beings and tame animals. He writes that it is the best for all tame animals to be ruled by human beings. In the same way, the relationship between the male and the female is by nature such that the male is higher, the female lower, that the male rules and the female is ruled.[9]

Support for monogamy
Aristotle wrote that a virtuous wife is best honored when she sees that her husband is faithful to her, and has no preference for another woman; but before all others loves and trusts her and holds her as his own. And so much the more will the woman seek to be what he accounts her.[10]

Status of Spartan women
Aristotle wrote that in Sparta, the legislator wanted to make the whole state hardy and temperate, and he has carried out his intention in the case of the men, but he has neglected the women, who live in every sort of intemperance and luxury. He adds that in those states in which the condition of the women is bad, half the city may be regarded as having no laws.[11]

Equal weight to female and male happiness
On the other hand, Aristotle gave equal weight to women's happiness as he did to men's, and commented in his Rhetoric that a society cannot be happy unless women are happy too. In places such as Sparta, where the lot of women is unhappy, there can only be half-happiness in society.[12]

Legacy

Galen
Aristotle's assumptions on female coldness influenced Galen and others for almost two thousand years until the sixteenth century.[13]
Church Fathers

In the classical age, which shaped patristic views, male sexuality and power were closely associated, and female sexuality was associated with passivity. Joyce E. Salisbury argues that the Church Fathers, influenced by Aristotle's opinions, opposed the practice of independent female ascetism because it threatened to emancipate women from men. To take one's pleasure was to be virile, to accept it, servile.\[14\]

Friedrich Nietzsche

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who has also been accused of holding negative views about women, was said to have taken nearly all of his political philosophy from Aristotle.\[15\]

Otto Weininger

In his Sex and Character, written in 1903, Otto Weininger argues that all people are composed of a mixture of the male and the female substance, and that these views are supported scientifically.

Modern feminists

Aristotle is considered by some contemporary feminist critics to have been a misogynist because of his views on procreation.\[16\] [17]

References


[12] see *Rhetoric*, 1.5.6


Article Sources and Contributors

Women’s history

Timeline of women's rights (other than voting)
Contributors: Aciram, Alexis1408, Aquacoconchick, Bill-on-the-Hill, Black Kite, Casteenbury Tail, Chatterjee, Cemersqu222, Dakimjones, Escape Orbit, Funkyderker, Halasm1, Jaa16888, Jagged 85, Jary1250, Jormiechowicz, Kurof, Lillhelpa, Mattz1010, NathantoNL, Neilsonoriginal, NetRoller3D, Pigman, Reconsider the static, Red Thunder, Riwiulinsi, Ryan Roos, S3000, Sandomaphus, Stan00 IMG, Shizumasa, SteveSims, Str177, Suruensu, That-Vela-Fella, TheSuave, Tony1, Welsh, Woonokitty, Winimichell, Yamara, Zodon, 116 anonymous edits

Legal rights of women in history

Venus figurines

Women in Church history
Contributors: ADM, Tonicthebrown, 4 anonymous edits

Women in the Middle Ages
Contributors: ADM, HappyInGeneral, I want to, LadyMontresor, Laurinavicius, Philip Traeman, Snec, Tonicthebrown, Warins321, Why Not A Duck, Wilfome, 3 anonymous edits

Women in the patriotic age
Contributors: ADM, Ericsides, 1 anonymous edits

Women's History Month
Contributors: ADM, Abbeyvet, Altenmann, Anish2454, Bobo192, BoomerAB, Bradjamesbrown, ByKidForKids, Cawwein, Cantaine87, Chaye7, Cureden, Dakimjones, Edithonis, Educatingjane, Emeronisi, Escorial, Fresalai, Hulz12, Ithornia, Ldx04, JCDenton2052, LiToMo236, Lighthouse, MPS, Mennisto, Neo-Jay, Parkwellh, Philippe, Pigman, ResoluteOfDesign, Rigadoun, Scarykitty, Sophyshackling, Tergenworth, Trickytunk, Truc, WC Stratton, Well, girl, look at you!, WreeplitChequers, Xizer, 43 anonymous edits

Nietzsche's views on women
Contributors: ADM, Goethean, Paininus, UserVOBO, Wewmarger, 1 anonymous edits

Aristotle's views on women
Contributors: ADM, Andrejiq, Camipeco, Ericsides, Kurof, LightSpectra, Pollinosoius, Snowded, Turgen, 5 anonymous edits
Image Sources, Licenses and Contributors


