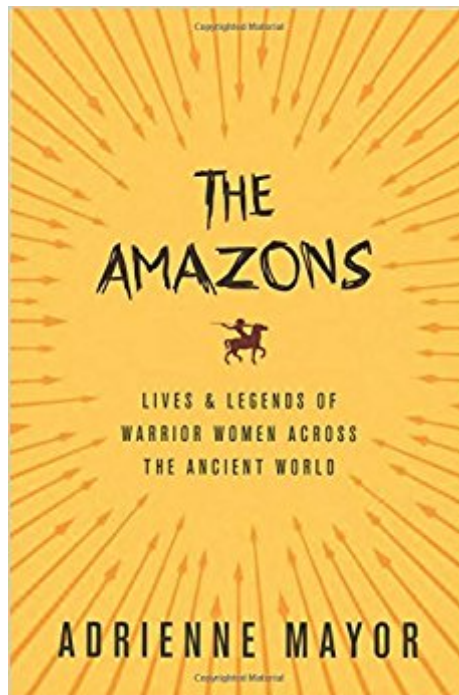


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# The S: Lives And Legends Of Warrior Women Across The Ancient World



## Synopsis

They were the mythic archenemies of the ancient Greeks. Heracles and Achilles displayed their valor in duels with queens, and the Athenians reveled in their victory over a powerful army. In historical times, Cyrus of Persia, Alexander the Great, and the Roman general Pompey tangled with them. But just who were these bold barbarian archers on horseback who gloried in fighting, hunting, and sexual freedom? Were they real? In this deeply researched, wide-ranging, and lavishly illustrated book, National Book Award finalist Adrienne Mayor presents the Amazons as they have never been seen before. This is the first comprehensive account of warrior women in myth and history across the ancient world, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Great Wall of China. Mayor tells how amazing new archaeological discoveries of battle-scarred female skeletons buried with their weapons prove that women warriors were not merely figments of the Greek imagination. Combining classical myth and art, nomadic traditions, and scientific archaeology, she reveals intimate, surprising details and original insights about the lives and legends of the women known as Amazons. Provocatively arguing that a timeless search for a balance between the sexes explains the allure of the Amazons, Mayor reminds us that there were as many love stories as there were war stories. The Greeks were not the only people enchanted by the Amazons. Mayor shows that warlike women of nomadic cultures inspired exciting tales in ancient Egypt, Persia, India, Central Asia, and China. Driven by a detective's curiosity, Mayor unearths long-buried evidence and sifts fact from fiction to show how flesh-and-blood women of the Eurasian steppes were mythologized as Amazons, the equals of men. The result is likely to become a classic.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Winner of the 2016 Sarasvati Award for Best Nonfiction Book in Women and Mythology, Association for the Study of Women & Mythology  
2015 Silver Medal Winner in the Independent Publisher Book Awards, World History category  
Selected for The New York Times Book Review  
"The Year in Reading"  
2016 Shortlisted for the 2014 London Hellenic Prize  
One of Foreign Affairs' Best Military, Scientific, and Technological Books of 2015  
Selected for American Scientist's Science Book Gift Guide 2014  
"In her quest to separate reality from mythology, Mayor left few stones unturned, even examining the graves of women with war wounds and mummified tattoos. She skillfully presents her findings with wit and conviction in this superbly illustrated book"--Lawrence D. Freedman, Foreign Affairs  
"Fluidly written and exhaustively researched, this fascinating book lit up my mind and my sense of humanity, not just with women in it, but under it, above it, flinging out constellations and atoms; carving out grand canyons hand-in-hand with men and beasts and glaciers, too."--Neko Case, singer-songwriter, New York Times Book Review  
"The s is elegantly written, nicely illustrated and will no doubt excite a lot of attention."--Simon Goldhill, Times Literary Supplement  
"Mayor specializes in connecting artifacts--paintings, sculptures, coins, bones, weapons, clothing, fossils--with the more diffuse evidence found in literature, lore and legend . . . in order to illuminate the lives of the ancient warrior women. . . . Impressive investigative work . . . fascinating."--James Romm, London Review of Books  
"[A] fascinatingly detailed account."--Emily Wilson, Wall Street Journal  
"Mayor (The Poison King) looks at ancient writings and archeological evidence to argue that yes, 's' were based on real nomadic women, though much different from the way ancient Greeks or contemporary audiences imagine them. . . . Mayor speculates on the origin of such misconceptions in ancient writings and art, smartly suggesting that, though s are usually depicted heroically in Greek art and mythology, the male-centric Greeks perhaps struggled to understand a society based on equality between the sexes. . . . Her expertise shines throughout."--Publishers Weekly  
"An encyclopedic study of the barbarian warrior women of Western Asia, revealing how new archaeological discoveries uphold the long-held myths and legends. The famed female archers on horseback from the lands the ancient Greeks called Scythia appeared throughout Greek and Roman legend. Mayor tailors her scholarly work to lay readers, providing a fascinating exploration into the factual identity underpinning the fanciful legends surrounding these wondrous s. . . . Mayor clears away much of the man-hating myths around these redoubtable warriors. Thanks to Mayor's scholarship, these fearsome fighters

are attaining their historical respectability."--Kirkus Reviews"A must-read for anyone interested in either ian myth or history."--Fred Poling, Library Journal"No one before has ever marshalled the full sweep of evidence as Mayor does here. . . . The result is a book as erudite as it riveting, one that is surely destined to serve as the definitive work on the subject."--Tom Holland, Literary Review"There are myriad myths surrounding the s, but which are based on truth? . . . This is the question which Adrienne Mayor seeks to answer in her hugely informative and entertaining Encyclopaedia ica."--Natalie Haynes, Independent"[A] lively and engaging exploration . . . vivid, compelling and detailed . . . a rich compendium."--Lloyd Llewellyn Jones, Times Higher Education"A beautiful book. . . . The s by Adrienne Mayor is required reading."--Anna Meldolesi, Corriere della Sera"Driven by a detective's curiosity, Mayor unearths long-buried evidence and sifts fact from fiction to show how flesh-and-blood women of the Eurasian steppes were mythologized as s, the equals of men. The result is likely to become a classic."--Peter Konieczny, History of the Ancient World blog"Mayor writes elegant, jargon free, frequently witty prose."--Barry Baldwin, Fortean Times"If Adrienne Mayor had merely applied her rigorous scholarship and poetic charm to documenting the shifting image of s in classical, medieval and post-Renaissance European culture, she would have written an important contribution to ancient history. But she has achieved much more. By painstaking research . . . she has broken down the often impenetrable walls dividing western cultural history from its eastern equivalents. . . . Mayor opens up new horizons in world storytelling and feminist iconography. . . . There may not be dolls in today's toyshops, but a good substitute would be to read this wonderful book with your children and show them its pictures."--Edith Hall, New Statesman"For anyone who thinks s were as mythical as centaurs or sphinxes, this pleasurable book proves that misconception is wondrously wrong. . . . Mayor's beautifully illustrated book, truly encyclopedic on all things ian, reclaims the historic image of these dauntless figures in the heroic frame they deserve."--Fran Willing, Bust.com"Mayor's book is popular history at its best. Much of her archaeological evidence is new -- such as her descriptions of 'Scythian' female graves with horses and weapons. She chooses wonderful illustrations which makes the book enjoyable and easy to read."--Zenobia blog"Clearly, with this clever, systematic and engaging work by Mayor, s got their classic book. And it is a riveting read, too."--Ephraim Nissan, Fabula"Mayor's fascinatingly readable book convincingly argues that many of their characteristics may have derived from real nomadic womenwarriors of antiquity. . . . It represents a remarkable scholarly breakthrough: no one will ever be able to discuss the myths again without taking into account the historical evidence she provides."--Tassos A. Kaplanis, Journal of Historical Geography"Adrienne Mayor has written an ambitious 'Encyclopedia ica' as she calls her book, a kind of compendium of information about the

s. . . . Her charming and seamless style can certainly provoke a reader's interest in the still distant and unknown terra incognita of the Black Sea and Caucasus regions and their nomadic life."--Eleni Boliaki, Bryn Mawr Classical Review

"I can't . . . begin to say how great it is to have a book like this, because it's exactly the kind of book I like. Not one that just dismisses old stories as being too tall or made up, but really gives them the benefit of the doubt and tries to correlate and reconcile them with hard evidence. This is brilliantly achieved in s. . . . This in many ways is an exhaustive study, every facet that could be thought of has been included, and very little left out."--Adventures in Historyland

"Mayor writes well, and not without dry humour, and although hardly given to the sensational, the sheer depth and breadth of her research and discoveries carry you along. You won't devour this in a sitting, just as you wouldn't eat a whole gooey gateau at once, but each slice of book is appetising enough to keep you coming back for more."--Lynn Picknett, Magonia Review of Books

"Adrienne Mayor's s . . . remains much the best guide to the ian blend of fact and fable."--David Butterfield, Spectator

"[The s] contains 400+ pages of fascinating evidence pertaining to the Scythian and Thracian women of ancient times, not to mention 100+ pages of source material at the end. There is no shortage of historical imagery depicting s through different artistic medians from paintings to carvings."--GeedMom

"[Mayor's] skill as a narrator has produced an excellent addition to popular ancient history that ranks highly for its commitment to educating general readers and its interdisciplinary approach."--Ian McElroy and Thomas Figueira, The Historian

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

"The s is a stupendous achievement--a long-anticipated centerpiece in the great puzzle of humankind. The story of these forbidden women, silenced for so long by the rigidity of traditional scholarship, is as exciting and surprising as a bestselling murder mystery; I simply couldn't put it down. Through

scholarly brilliance and passion, Adrienne Mayor has opened the door to a forgotten world of gender equality, and her book ought to be required reading in every college history course."--Anne Fortier, author of *The Lost Sisterhood: A Novel*"Nobody brings ancient history and archaeology to life like Adrienne Mayor. From the Russian steppes to China, and from Roman Egypt and Arabia to the Etruscans, she leads the reader on a breathtaking quest for the real ancient warrior women reflected in myths--their daring, archery, tattoos, fine horses, and independence from male control. The book's rich erudition, communicated in sparkling prose and beautiful illustrations, makes it a riveting read."--Edith Hall, author of *Introducing the Ancient Greeks: From Bronze Age Seafarers to Navigators of the Western Mind*"Adrienne Mayor's inquiry into the myth--and surprising reality--of women begins with the fierce Greek huntress Atalanta, but takes us deep into the past and as far afield as the Great Wall of China. With the restless curiosity and meticulous scholarship that have become her hallmark, the author once again has found a gap in my bookshelf and filled it, admirably."--Steven Saylor, author of *Raiders of the Nile: A Novel of the Ancient World*"Adrienne Mayor excels at demonstrating the truth that lies behind what seems simply storytelling, and there is no more exciting confrontation of myth and history than in the story of the s. This is a great book--at once exhaustive, scholarly, thrilling, and imaginative, spanning the history, art, and imagination of ancient peoples from Italy to China."--John Boardman, University of Oxford"One can only wonder at the courage and conviction of the ancient warrior women who dared to defy their peers, and who became such powerful inspirations that their memory lives on for millennia. We owe it to them to remember their stories. Adrienne Mayor's fabulous book illuminates a complex picture of ancient lives. It gives us the chance to understand these amazing female fighters, and to recognize their daughters in our midst, those who fight with courage and conviction for what they know is a better world."--Samantha "Swords" Catto-Mott, medieval long-sword champion and creator of special effects in film"In this fascinating book, which combines flowing prose, a lively and engaging presentation, and wonderful illustrations, Adrienne Mayor brings the reader into the excitement of discovering the truth about the s. She demonstrates quite convincingly that the traditions largely derive from the undeniable historical fact that nomadic, armed horsewomen existed on the fringes of the ancient Greek world. Mayor is the first to examine the evidence systematically and in detail and she makes a concrete and persuasive case."--William Hansen, author of *Classical Mythology: A Guide to the Mythical World of the Greeks and Romans*"In this comprehensive account of the s, Adrienne Mayor examines the subject in a way that no one else has done and presents overwhelming evidence that they were not entirely fictitious. Only Mayor has looked at the evidence from all the relevant fields to show how, together, they can solve what to each of them separately

are complete mysteries. This will be the classic book on the subject for a very long time."--Elizabeth Wayland Barber, author of *The Dancing Goddesses: Folklore, Archaeology, and the Origins of European Dance*

One of the best non-fiction books I've ever read. I am totally fascinated by it, and so sad that we have lost so much history about these amazing warrior women. It's an academic book, but it doesn't read like one. I wish I had more time to sit and read the whole thing - right now I'm reading bits of it as I wait to pick up my kids from school and it's hard to put it down again! I have the electronic version of it, but this is one that I wished I had bought as a hard copy so that the pictures would be in the right spots and because I would love to mark it up by hand and put notes in the margins (not quite the same on a Kindle). I didn't realize how much I never knew about these women until I got this book. If you love history or are interested in s - definitely check this one out.

The s by Adrienne Mayor gives us solid, scholarly evidence for the lives of Scythian and Thracian women in the 1st Millennium BCE. It's very useful to me because she qualifies every speculation about s in the historical and literary texts from the Classical Greek, Hellenistic and Roman eras with the physical evidence. Although these women evidently led harsh lives, it is uplifting to see evidence of freedom and a relative gender equality between men and women SOMEWHERE in the ancient world. I'm recommending it to everyone!

The world needs at least 100 more authors like her, all on the same subject. I find it surprising, very disappointing, that the author will not admit that these women had nothing to do with Matriarchies, or that there is not enough evidence. There is, but you're looking in the wrong direction. Ms Mayor, these Warrior's were informed, how could they not have known about The Great Mother's who were everywhere through out the world on every continent in their own times? Especially the aboriginals who worshiped mostly feminine energy's/Goddesses of Nature/Earth, Universe, etc. Who gave them their skills, their strength, their knowledge of martial arts, their knowledge of medicine/herbs, all the inner sciences they needed to survive. It wasn't men, NO, it was their Civilization Of Women/Shamans, Kung-Fu Master's, Spiritually Enlightened Master Women who taught them. This needs to be finally told to the world before it's too late, before this becomes censored and as usual called myth. Otherwise the book is just a good start to a vastness that waits to be finally told to our daughters and sons. I highly recommend the book "The Great Cosmic Mother" by Monica Sjoo & Barbara Mor. Any woman or man seeking their origins, or wanting to start training in any martial

art, than these two books will greatly enrich them on all levels, especially in their hearts. I gave her 5 stars because I hope she will expand on the topic and support her sister's world wide who are in great suffering right now and need this info to stand tall and realize what they have been denied for way too long.. Sincerely Tony Escalante, Jr.

Very interesting. It reveals the true nature of archaeology and at the same time uncovers a unique civilization where women hold their own with men and in many cases show their true strength.

This is a fine study on a heretofore neglected subject. Meticulously researched, the author brings to light a lost world that may very well have had greater influence upon western civilization than previously supposed.

Incredibly comprehensive and detailed. Any history student and even professional must have this book. The referencing is excellent. It presents information with as much unbiased as possible, adding counter theories for the readers exploration. Only wish there were better maps and more images of evidence that is out there.

Very informative and refreshing perspective on the warrior women of old.

An incredibly fascinating read! The s were REAL, y'all!!!

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