

Civic Honors for Young Girls in Hellenistic Greece.
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The late plays of Euripides with their overtly patriotic themes of heroic female self-sacrifice have puzzled commentators in part because classical Athens has seemed to allow women a very limited public role. Scholars have generally de-emphasized the importance of those few religious occasions when Athenian girls were seen in public, but over all it seems fair to say that in the Classical period Athenian girls lacked significant civic status. An examination of the women named and women's naming on Attic inscriptions of the Hellenistic period suggests a marked difference. In particular a series of inscriptions honoring young girls with civic crowns suggests that the public praise of women for performing civic roles, particularly for young girls from wealthy families and their mothers, was a possible and perhaps even a common feature of Athenian social life in the Hellenistic period. Parallels between praise for girls and praise for boys further may suggest that some girl's traditional initiation rites were explicitly viewed as educational in the same way that ephebic training was at this time. These developments are characteristic of the second century when many of the distinctive features of Athenian society of the fifth century seem to have disappeared, and when Roman patronage after the battle of Pydna had renewed Athenian wealth and prestige as a Hellenistic city.