



## Antik Çağ'dan İtibaren Tarih Boyunca Kadının Toplum İçindeki Yeri

*From Ancient Age to The Present: The Role of Women in Society Throughout History*

### ÖZET

Tarihten günümüze kadar kadınların yaşadıkları toplum içinde kendilerine değer verilmesi, cinsiyet ayrımcılığının önlenerek sosyal ve kamusal yapılarda yer almaları Antik Çağ döneminde yaşamış medeniyetlerin içinde yer alan kadına bakış olgusu ve değeri günümüze kadar olan süreçte bazı değişimlere uğramış olmakla birlikte çok fazla değişmemiş, ataerkil yapı hakimiyeti her dönemde varlığını sürdürmüştür. Bazı topluluklar tarafından çoğunlukla dışlanan kadınlara sadece statü olarak iyi bir eş ve annelik rolü tanımlanmış olup, talihsizliklerin nedeni olarak da kadın sorumlu tutulmuştur. Tarihin belli dönemlerinde ise çok az medeniyetlerde kadın değerli ve kutsal kabul edilmiştir. Tarihsel süreçte yine kadın liderler tarafından başarılı bir şekilde yönetilen devletler olduğu görülmüştür. Kadına değer ve önem veren medeniyetler toplumsal gelişim süreçlerinde de hızlı ilerleme yaparak yaşadıkları dönem içinde güçlü uygarlıklar haline gelmiştir. Kadınların eşit ve özgür olma mücadelesi ancak 19. ve 20. yüzyılda gerçekleşmeye başlamıştır. Yapılan bu çalışmada farklı kültür, uygarlıklar ve devletler kuran toplumlar içinde yaşayan kadınların sosyal yaşamları, kendilerine verilen değer ve önem tarama yöntemi ile araştırılmıştır. Bu yöntem doğrultusunda, kütüphane ve elektronik ortamlarda yer alan dergi ve kitaplara ulaşılmış, çalışmayla ilgili olanlar seçilmiş ve kullanılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın, Toplum, Cinsiyet Roller, Aile, Sosyal Yaşam

### ABSTRACT

Throughout history, the value attributed to women within the societies they lived in, their inclusion in social and public structures by preventing gender discrimination, and the perception and worth of women within civilizations that existed in the ancient world have undergone some changes over time, yet patriarchal dominance has remained prevalent in every era. Some societies have defined women, who were often marginalized, solely in terms of their status as good wives and their roles as mothers, while also holding women responsible for misfortunes. In certain periods of history, however, women have been considered valuable and sacred in very few civilizations. Throughout history, there have been states that were successfully governed by women leaders. Civilizations that value and prioritize women have made rapid progress in their societal development processes, evolving into powerful civilizations during their respective eras. The struggle for women to achieve equality and freedom began to unfold only in the 19th and 20th centuries. In this study, the social lives, value, and importance attributed to women living within societies that have established different cultures, civilizations, and states were investigated through a method of source scanning. Through this method, access was gained to journals and books available in libraries and electronic sources, and those relevant to the study were selected and utilized.

**Keywords:** Woman, Society, Gender Roles, Family, Social Life

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history, women have been compelled to navigate their lives through the gender roles assigned to them by men and the societies in which they lived. "From ancient times to the present, in many states or civilizations that have been established, women have often been relegated to a secondary position, considered responsible for reproduction, or perceived as the cause of misfortunes befalling society. However, within the patriarchal and feudal structures of their eras, there have also been women who not only proved their existence but even governed their states.

The societal beliefs constructed throughout history regarding women have manifested themselves in both individual and social life in every era.

The transition from matriarchal to patriarchal structures, along with beliefs, rituals, and religious teachings, has constrained women, keeping them within very limited spheres and distancing them from social life and other roles they should assume within society.

The aim of this study is to highlight the value and significance of women in the society they inhabit, both in terms of governance and social life, in civilizations that value women's societal status.

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Within the scope of this study, the social status of women living in various societies from Ancient Greece, Roman Civilization, Babylonians, Hittites, Assyrians, Sumerians, Scythians, up to the Medieval and Modern periods, including the Byzantine, Seljuk, Ottoman, European, and 19th and 20th centuries, has been examined.

The study was conducted through a scanning method. In accordance with this method, access was gained to journals and books available in libraries and electronically, and those relevant to the study were selected and used.

### **B.C. ERA: Women in Ancient Greece**

In ancient Greek society, women were subjected to different treatment from the moment they were born. With the society's emphasis on a warrior-based structure, male children were raised as warriors, while female children were denied the right to education and prepared for motherhood. During this period, women could even be deprived of the right to motherhood. After giving birth, babies would be taken from them, and weak, deemed unfit, or disabled infants would even be killed, by drowning (Karaaslan, 2016).

In ancient Greece, women had no political rights or authority in any field. The remaining family inheritance would only be given to the male child. Monogamy was one of the fundamental principles, and infidelity by a married woman was considered one of the gravest offenses. A man could divorce his wife without cause, and similarly, a woman could divorce and reclaim her dowry. Women could participate in collective religious rituals but sat separately from men. The highest and most honorable role for women during this period was to become a priestess (Harman, 2019).

In ancient Greece, women's lives were confined to the home. While men served the state, women's domain was solely the household. In every home, there was a section known as the 'gynaikon,' reserved for women. Women were expected to bear children for their husbands, raise them, and manage the household. The typical age for women to marry ranged from 13 to 15. The prevailing belief in ancient Greek society was that women should always be protected by men. Women in ancient Greece were not granted the freedom to participate in political and social life (Saçı, 2021).

**Figure 1: Women in Ancient Greece**



References: <https://listelist.com/antik-yunan-kadinlar>. Access Date: May 30, 2023.

### **B.C. ERA: Woman in Ancient Rome**

In ancient Roman families, daughters were raised with strict discipline, and marriage was considered a virtue for them; they were raised accordingly. Upon marriage, they came under the authority of their husbands. Particularly, the value attributed to giving birth to male children led wives to take on the responsibility of caring for their homes and raising their children. The firstborn daughters were left untouched and raised within the family. Special places were designated for unwanted female infants to be left. Additionally, disabled or illegitimate babies were also left in these special places. In order to raise their children and to become good Roman citizens in the future, mothers supported the education of their daughters, ensuring that they would not be deprived of an education (Gönenç, 2010, pp. 52-54).

In ancient Rome, women, before marriage, made agreements with their prospective husbands to ensure that they remained a part of their own families even after getting married. This was because, according to these marriage agreements, a woman was only considered part of her husband's family after leaving her own family's home. Although a rare occurrence, in the event of her father's death, a woman could become the head of her own household. This situation often caused tension within the Roman society of that era, as it did not align with the gender roles established by Roman culture. To avoid such situations, Roman men began to opt for purchasing female slaves rather

than marrying free women, in an effort to maintain their status within society and prove that they still held power. Over time, this practice led to a decrease in the number of marriages. To encourage Roman women to bear children for the benefit of society, new laws were enacted, making marriage mandatory for everyone and granting more freedom to women who met the legal marriage requirement of giving birth to at least three children (Ulusoy, 2016).

**Figure 2: Woman in Ancient Rome**



References: <https://onedio.com/haber/antik-romada>. Access Date: May 24, 2023.

### **B.C. ERA: Woman in Babylonian Period**

Women living during the Babylonian period are documented in the III. Ur archives as actively participating in economic activities. In particular, they were engaged in weaving, pottery, agriculture, and metalwork, and they had economic relations with women from other cities (Bahrani, 2018, p. 187). During this period, women were often represented as sexual objects and lived within a matriarchal society for an extended period.

In ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, there was a transition from matriarchal to patriarchal structures over time. As a result, a male-dominated structure gradually became established within society. Men had influence in political, military, religious, and social aspects of life. Women's social statuses were often defined in relation to their roles as queen mothers, wives, and daughters. Royal marriages were arranged for princesses as a means to establish and maintain peace with other countries (Kağnıcı, 2020).

During the Babylonian period, both women and men would enter into marriage through a written document in the presence of witnesses. Documents from that era emphasized the foundation of family unity through laws related to marriage, divorce, spousal relationships, inheritance, and adoption. Infidelity and adultery were considered grounds for divorce during marriage and were subject to severe penalties. Although there were variations in practices, it was generally regarded as a crime punishable by death (Sümbül, 2020).

**Figure 3: Woman in Babylon Period**



References: <https://aktuelarkeoloji.com.tr/kategori/arkeoloji/mezopotamya-da-kadin-olmak>. Access Date: May 30, 2023.

### **B.C. ERA: Woman in the Hittite Period**

In the Hittite society, the family structure was based on monogamy. The recognition of rights such as formal documentation of marriage and divorce, record-keeping, and the equal division of property and assets in case of divorce indicated that women and men had equal rights. Only in the case of a married woman's infidelity, there was no punishment for the husband if he killed the adulterous wife. Additionally, during the Hittite period, almost all women were working women, primarily engaged in pottery making, weaving, and agricultural tasks. However, despite women performing the same tasks as men, they received only half the wages. Moreover, Hittite women actively participated in political life. This is best exemplified in the 'Kadesh Agreement' with Egypt, where the king and queen of the Hittites were represented equally and jointly sealed the agreement (Ediz, 1995, pp. 11-18).



In the Hittite period, alongside women engaged in trade and homemaking, there were also women who were acquired and sold as slaves. During that era's social stratification, society was divided into those who were free and those who were not. For instance, a woman who had debts and couldn't pay them on time could fall into a slave-like status. Additionally, foreign traders who came for commerce would purchase some young women. In Hittite society, laws concerning women were established in social life. Thanks to these laws, when it came to the marriage of a Hittite girl, a bride price was paid to her family, and her family provided her with a dowry. Furthermore, women were granted the right to divorce. Incestuous relationships were strictly prohibited according to Hittite laws and were punishable by death. In addition, Hittite women had inheritance rights. In the event of a woman's husband's death, to secure her future, the widowed woman would often be married to her deceased husband's older or younger brother. (Doğan, 2020).

**Figure 4: Woman in the Hittite Period**



References: <https://aktuelarkeoloji.com.tr/kategori/arkeoloji/hititlerde-kadin>. Access Date: May 24, 2023.

**Figure 5: Sacred Marriage in the Hittite Period**



References: <https://aktuelarkeoloji.com.tr/kategori/arkeoloji/hititlerde-kadin>. Access Date: May 24, 2023.

### **B.C. ERA: Woman in The Assyrian Period**

The written history of Anatolia began around 2nd millennium BC. Prior to this period, there was no written history, so there is limited information available about the civilizations that existed in Anatolia. Some information about these civilizations is attempted to be gathered through of female figurines, kitchen and decorative tools, icons, and sculptures from that era. Women living in Anatolian cities, for example, during the time of the Assyrians, were known to have been involved in trade, conducting transactions with promissory notes and seals, and they had the right to initiate legal proceeding and typically lived in monogamous marriages. However, in cases of divorce, spouses could not continue living together or share the same house. This period presents one of the earliest instances of family law being established in favor of women's rights. Marriages, divorces, and adoptions were carried out in front of witnesses and with official documents. In the event of separation, the husband would pledge to pay a certain amount of silver or gold as agreed upon during the marriage, which was documented with official paperwork and witnessed by others (İnan, 1975, pp. 5-7).

The tablets from the Assyrian period indicate that women were actively engaged in working alongside their husbands or brothers. Women who had a say in the country's administration held significant roles in the business world. Furthermore, during the marriage and divorce processes, women and men had equal rights. Assyrians were allowed to marry only one spouse, and taking a second spouse was prohibited. It is very evident that gender equality was quite pronounced in this civilization established in Anatolia during that period (Evrensel, 2018).

**Figure 6: Woman in the Assyrian Period**

References: <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/364302/anadoluda-kadinlar-ticari-anlasma-yapip-muhur-basiyordu>. Access Date: May 30, 2023.

**B.C. ERA: WOMAN IN THE SUMERIAN AND SCYTHIAN PERIODS**

In the Sumerian and Scythian societies, it is observed that women who couldn't have children had their husbands remarry. In the polytheistic Sumerian culture, women were regarded as symbols of fertility and abundance, and goddesses took precedence over gods. Sumerian women had the ability to testify independently and manage their property as they saw fit. Among the Scythians, women were trained and raised as warriors and soldiers (Bakay, 2006, pp. 19-21).

According to Muazzez İlmiye Çığ, in Sumerian culture, goddesses held great significance. The most important of these goddesses was "Inanna," who represented fertility. This was because Sumer was an agricultural country, and its economy relied entirely on agriculture. For this reason, reproduction and procreation were of utmost importance. It was a necessary condition for a woman to be a virgin during the marriage process. If a married woman was not a virgin, she could receive less compensation in case of divorce. In Sumer, monogamy was practiced, but if a woman did not fulfill her expected duties, the man had the right to remarry. Marriages and divorces were always conducted in front of a court. Additionally, women were involved in all aspects of social life. They engaged in trade and could collaborate with their husbands in business ventures (Çığ, 2012).

**Figure 7: Social Life and Women in Sumerians**

References: <https://hayatpencerem.wordpress.com/2013/08/09/sumer-mitolojisi-karamanlari/>. Access Date: May 24, 2023.

**Figure 8: Scythians and Warrior Women**

References: <https://www.arkeolojisanat.com/shop/blog/gocebe-savasci-iskitler>. Access Date: May 24, 2023.



## COMMON ERA: Women in Ancient Turkic States

The Göktürks, in 552 CE, established the first state in history with the name "Turk" by achieving peace among various Turkic tribes. In Turkic society, the family was considered the fundamental structure of the community, and great importance was placed on family life. While men were recognized as the heads of households, women were also respected and valued members of society. Among the Turks, monogamous marriages were common (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2023).

In the Göktürk and Uyghur societies, women and men had equal rights. In Turkic Shamanism, the most powerful deities were regarded as Mother Goddesses. Women held a distinct place in inter-state relations and special ceremonies. In the ancient Turkic states that led a nomadic lifestyle, women participated in warfare alongside men, using bows and arrows, and riding horses (Bakay, 2006, pp. 19-21).

In different historical periods, the status of Turkish women in society and family life has varied. Before the acceptance of Islam, especially during the nomadic era, Turkish women would ride horses, shoot arrows, wield swords, and engage in combat against enemies.

After transitioning to a settled way of life and the acceptance of Islam, women became more passive compared to men and ceased to utilize many of the skills they had acquired in the past. In Central Asia, rulers were referred to as 'Hakan,' and their wives were called 'Hatun.' Turkish women received military training to fight alongside men in battles. In ancient Turkish families, the birth of a daughter was not considered dishonorable; in fact, they would pray to their deities to bless them with daughters. The Orkhon inscriptions even contain expressions like "The Hakan governs the state, the Hatun knows the state." Women used to stand by their husbands in battles, political gatherings, and social interactions. However, after the acceptance of Islam, due to that the tradition of men having multiple wives and women withdrew from public life, their education suffered, and they started to be seen as the property of men. Consequently, Turkish women lost their voice within the family and began to feel the absence of being a full partner to their husbands (Doğramacı, 1992, pp. 2-5). The most significant evidence that demonstrates the equality between women and men in pre-Islamic Turkish societies is the absence of polygamy (Ediz, 1995, pp. 11-18).

During the shamanistic period of the Turks, Turkish women would sometimes be alongside their men, and at times, they even held positions of authority higher than their men. In ancient Turkish society and lifestyle, the concept of motherhood was central and revered. Throughout Turkish history, there have been women who ruled as monarchs. The theme of women and motherhood was considered the fundamental element of the society and a representative of civilization in ancient Turkish history. For example, the mother of Genghis Khan had a significant influence on his establishment of the world's largest empire. In ancient Turkish society, women took their place alongside men in all aspects of life (Asım, 1989, p. 23).

Figure 9: The Ancient Turkish Hakan and His Hatun



References: <https://www.yenivatan.at/tuerk-toeresinde-hatun-kutsaldir-saygindir-ve-her-yerde-baskoesededir/>. Access Date: May 24, 2023.

## COMMON ERA: Women in Byzantine Period

There isn't much information available about women lived in rural areas during the Byzantine period. However, between the years 1300-1400, it is known that women who came to worship at Hagia Sophia were mostly from the upper class, were highly adorned and were criticized by the monks. Women of that period felt more liberated compared to Byzantine women in the past. In Byzantium, democracy was considered a dangerous and unspeakable concept for men, and the form of government was monarchy. What mattered was not an individual's achievements but their lineage from their family. Women began to take on important roles in society and the continuation of the empire rather than just the roles of wives and mothers. Upper-class Byzantine women actively opposed the church

and societal life in the 13th and 14th centuries. At the same time, these women were quite wealthy due to the wealth and land they inherited from their families. Although Byzantine society had a patriarchal structure, the management of the household and the upbringing of children were considered the mother's responsibilities. Byzantine law granted women extensive economic rights, and the dowries (the bride's family's payment to the groom) brought by women upon marriage were especially used for the benefit of children. The marriages of girls were not carried out for diplomatic power or economic purposes. In Byzantine times, the approved marriage age was 12 for girls and 14 for boys (Nicol, 2001, pp. 2-7). If the deceased emperor left no male child, the throne could pass to his daughter. She could marry either on her own or choose a suitable spouse from an aristocratic or military background. Similarly, the widowed empress of a deceased emperor could also select an appropriate spouse to secure the future of the empire (Connor, 2011, pp. 289-290).

**Figure 10: Byzantine Women**



Reference: <https://www.tarihisanat.com/bizansa-hukmeden-kadin-theodora/> Access Date: May 24, 2023.

### **COMMON ERA: Women In The Seljuk, Ottoman, And European Periods**

In the Seljuk society, women within the dynasty were actively involved in political and social life. They established their own social and military systems, possessed personal wealth, and used them at their own free will (Doğru, 2023).

For example, during the time of Seljuk Sultan Melikşah, the words of his wife, Terken Hatun, held weight in all state affairs. Her era saw the establishment of the first women's organization called 'Bacıyan-ı Rum.' Noble Turkish families would enroll their daughters in this organization, and they would conceal their identities (Bakay, 2006, pp. 19-21).

In ancient Turkish societies, women always stood by their husbands in political, legal, and military matters. During the Seljuk period, women were also involved in cultural and artistic activities and established endowments. Especially in the Seljuk State, women had a broad range of mobility in political, military, economic, cultural, religious, and social aspects. The position of women in social life and within the family was crucial, as they were always the assistants of their husbands and took on the role of their husbands' representatives in their absence. Despite having a patriarchal structure, in the Seljuk period, women and men were considered equals in social life (Güvendik, 2020).



**Figure 11: Women in the Seljuk Period**


Reference: <https://www.tuicakademi.org/anadolu-selcuklu-devleti-doneminde-bir-kadin-orgutlenmesi-ornegi-baciyar-rum/> Access Date: May 24, 2023.

**Figure 12: Warrior Women in the Seljuk Period**


Reference: <https://www.akademiktarihtr.com/selcukludakadin/> Access Date: May 24, 2023.

In the Ottoman period, Ottoman women were born free and independent. None of the wealth a woman possessed before marriage would be transferred to her husband after marriage; it remained under her control, and her husband couldn't use it without her consent and permission *kullanamazdı* (Temizer, 2022). In the Ottoman era, marriage contracts were officiated by female *qadis* (judges) for free women. They lived with their religious marriages unless their husbands divorced them for a valid reason, and they raised their children. Ottoman women did not participate in commercial life, preferred to live in accordance with Islamic principles, and remained outside of social, political, and economic life.

Most Ottoman sultans predominantly preferred wives of Turkish descent. During the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the palace was filled with captives and concubines as a result of wars and conquered territories. One of these concubines, Roxelana, captivated Suleiman with her beauty (Refik, 1984, pp. 34-47), and she made history as the first consort from the harem to become a legally married wife of a sultan during the Ottoman era, known as Hurrem Sultan. This was a condition of that era. Due to the problems caused by marriages to foreign spouses in the past Turkish states, it had been prohibited for sultans to marry. Beautiful and healthy girls selected from among the captives brought to the palace were trained in palace etiquette, music, religious knowledge, reading, writing, dancing, and more, and presented to the sultan. The concubines who became pregnant by the sultan were called "favorite" and were allocated a separate room for childbirth.

If the child born was a boy (especially the first-born son), then she would become the padishah's sultan wife. The concubine who gave birth to a girl would remain as a favorite, and her status wouldn't change. The primary goal in the Ottoman palace was to bear male children. After the death of the sultan, the eldest prince would ascend to the



throne, issuing the death decree for his brothers born from other favorites by suffocating them with a silk cord. As for the sisters, they were married off to prominent statesmen much older than them under the orders of the sultan.

**Figure 13: Women in the Ottoman**



Reference: <https://olaybende.com/tarih/osmanlida-kadin-haklari-ve-osmanlida-kadin-olmak/> Access Date: May 24, 2023.

Throughout the years, women in Europe who often remained in the background while men took the forefront have played significant roles in governing their countries from behind the scenes or by directly seizing the throne. Their courage, sense of justice, equality, and abilities have led to remarkable achievements in history. Among the countries where women ascended to the throne the most, England and Russia stand out. In England, Queen Elizabeth I defended Protestantism by waging war against Spain, turning her country into a formidable naval power with one of the strongest fleets of her time. During the reigns of Mary and Anne, democracy took firm root in England. In the era of Queen Victoria, the British Empire expanded worldwide, incorporating Egypt and South Africa within its borders. In Russia, in the 18th century, Catherine the Great expanded Russian territory up to the Black Sea by waging wars against the Ottoman Empire. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Queen Isabella I of Spain played a crucial role in the discovery of America by providing Christopher Columbus with the ships and resources he needed (Üçok, 1981, pp. 13-14).

**Figure 14: Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth I**



Reference: <https://www.haberturk.com/kralice-i-elizabeth-in-civa-ve-kursunla-yaptigi-olumcul-makyaji-3581028/2>.

Access Date: May 24, 2023.

In 1789, during the French Revolution, women participated in the process to obtain equal rights; however, later on, they were excluded from political rights, and freedom and equality were only granted to men. During World War I and World War II, women's contribution to production increased, and although they had the opportunity to work in public spheres, after the wars ended, they couldn't fully achieve the rights they desired. After the establishment of the United Nations, women began to be legally protected through "the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights*". "The *United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women*" (1952) and "the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*" (1979-CEDAW) can be cited as examples of women's human rights. (Doğru, 2023).

**Figure 15: Women Who Participated in the 1789 French Revolution**



Reference: [https://www.tarihiolaylar.com/tarihi-olaylar/fransiz-devrimi-kanli-ihtilal-1789-1799-332#google\\_vignette](https://www.tarihiolaylar.com/tarihi-olaylar/fransiz-devrimi-kanli-ihtilal-1789-1799-332#google_vignette). Access Date: May 24, 2023.

**Figure 16: Russian Empress Catherine II**



Reference: <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/biyografi/ii-katerina>. Access Date: May 24, 2023.

In Western countries, women were traditionally considered the property of their husbands and fathers and were not legally regarded as equals until the 19th century. In the United States, married women's property rights were granted in 1809, while in Scandinavian countries, women were given inheritance rights only in the mid-19th century. Women's suffrage rights were granted in the United Kingdom in 1928 (Temizer, 2022). In Turkey, women's right to vote and stand for election was granted in 1934.

*"Human rights are for everyone, not just for men."* - Flora TRISTAN.

*"One who is not independent cannot be free."* - María MONTESSORI.

*"Reason, which we recognize as our highest and only law-giver, commands us to be free"* - Mathilde Franziska ANNEKE.

*"Women should make use of every kind of ability that God has given them."* - Harriet Beecher STOWE.

## RESULT

In every era of history, women have occupied different statuses within society. During times when matriarchal structures existed, women were revered as sacred and symbolized abundance and fertility. In nomadic societies, women were considered equal to men, riding horses, bearing swords, and participating in wars alongside men.



Even in civilizations where patriarchal structures prevailed and left their mark on history, women often lacked rights and freedoms. They were relegated to roles such as slaves, concubines, or similar practices, keeping them on the fringes of social life. Within society, a woman's role was often limited to fertility and motherhood. In some civilizations, women had no say or rights even over their own children.

In ancient Greece, while boys were given the opportunity for education to become warriors, girls were deprived of such education and were raised solely for the role of motherhood. Female infants who were born weak or with disabilities were often euthanized. During this period, women couldn't inherit family estates, and although monogamy was practiced, men had the right to divorce their wives without a valid reason. Women in ancient Greece were excluded from social and political life and were confined to their homes.

In ancient Roman civilization, girls were raised with discipline by their families, and marriage was considered a virtue for girls, with the expectation that they would come under the authority of their husbands upon marriage. Especially, women were expected to give birth to male children, and they were expected to take care of the house and children. A special place was even designated for unwanted infants. Women were primarily expected to excel in their role as mothers to raise good Roman citizens by providing proper care and education for their children. During the Babylonian period, women were involved in trade. They lived within a matriarchal structure. Over time, the transition from a matriarchal to a patriarchal structure took place. Marriage and the marital process for both women and men were documented in writing during this period. Matters such as marriage, divorce, marital relationships, inheritance, and other aspects related to family unity were of significant importance in this period.

In Hittite society, marriage was based on monogamy, and formal documents were used to record marriages and divorces. Women in the Hittite period were actively involved in various aspects of public life. During this time, alongside with the women engaged in trade as well as those who played the role of housewives, there were also women who were enslaved and bought and sold. They were divided into social classes, distinguishing between those who were free and those who were not.

During the Assyrian period, it is observed that women were engaged in trade, signed commercial agreements, and practiced monogamy. Additionally, women had the right to initiate legal proceedings, and after divorce, they did not share the same household with their former husbands. In marriage contracts, it was ensured that if divorce were to occur, the man would provide a certain amount of gold or silver to financially secure the woman.

In Sumer, a polytheistic society, women were considered symbols of fertility and abundance, and goddesses were prominently worshiped in place of gods. Women in Sumer had the ability to act as witnesses independently and could use their personal property as they saw fit. Among the Scythians, women were trained as warriors and fighters. Monogamy was practiced in Sumer, but if a woman failed to fulfill her expected duties, the man was granted the right to remarry. Marriage and divorce always took place in front of a court. Additionally, women were actively involved in various aspects of social life. They could engage in trade and participate in joint businesses with their husbands.

In the ancient Turkic states established in the Common Era, the family was considered the cornerstone of society, and women were highly valued both within the family and in social life. Monogamy was always practiced among the Turks. Equal rights were granted to women and men in society. Women held a respected position in society. They joined their husbands in battle, were skilled archers and horseback riders, and even engaged in combat with enemies. In the absence of their husbands, they took on a role as their husbands' representatives. They received special military training to participate in battles against enemies. In Turkish families, there was no distinction between male and female children, and prayers were offered to the gods for the birth of daughters. In ancient Turkish society, women took their place alongside men in all aspects of life.

In Byzantine society, women were considered primarily responsible for their homes and the upbringing of children within a patriarchal structure. Additionally, Byzantine women were granted economic freedoms, allowing them the right to use the dowry they brought in as they wished. The marriage age for women varied between 12 and 14 years old.

During the Seljuk period, women actively participated in political and social life and had the freedom to use their personal wealth as they wished. The first women's organization, known as "Bacıyan-ı Rum," was established during the Seljuk era. Women in the Seljuk period were involved in cultural and artistic activities and even established charitable foundations. The role of women in social life and within the family was highly regarded, and despite the patriarchal structure of society, women were considered equal to men in social life during the Seljuk period.

After the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, free Ottoman women did not transfer their wealth before marriage to their husbands after marriage; instead, they retained control over their assets, and their husbands could not use

these assets without the woman's consent and permission. In the early days of the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman rulers preferred to marry women of Turkish descent. Over time, after winning wars, foreign girls were brought into the palace as slaves. In the Ottoman era, marriage contracts were performed by Islamic judges (kadis) for free women. They lived through religious marriages as long as their husbands did not divorce them for a justifiable reason and raised their children. Ottoman women did not participate in commercial life, preferred to lead a life in accordance with Islamic principles, and remained outside the scope of social, political, and economic activities.

In Europe, queens have successfully left their mark in history by governing their states with justice, equality, and their abilities. In England, Queen Elizabeth I defended Protestantism by waging war against Spain and turned her country into a powerful nation with the strongest naval fleet of the time. In England, during the reigns of Mary and Anne, democracy fully took hold. During the Victorian era, under Queen Victoria's rule, the British Empire expanded globally, incorporating Egypt and South Africa into its territorial boundaries. In Russia, in the 18th century, Catherine II expanded Russian territories up to the Black Sea through wars with the Ottoman Empire. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Queen Isabella I of Spain played a direct role in the discovery of America by providing Christopher Columbus with the ships and resources he needed.

In 1789, despite their participation in the events of the 1789 French Revolution to obtain equal rights, women were later excluded from political rights, and freedom and equality were only granted to men. During World War I and World War II, women's contributions to production increased, and although they had the opportunity to work in public spheres, they couldn't fully achieve the rights they desired after the wars ended.

In Western countries, until the 19th century, women were often considered the property of their husbands and fathers and were not legally regarded as equals. In the United States, the property rights of married women were recognized in 1809, and in Scandinavian countries, inheritance rights were granted to women only in the mid-19th century. The right to vote for women was granted in the UK in 1928. In Turkey, after the establishment of the Republic, women were granted the right to vote and be elected in 1934. In patriarchal societies, some of the situations where gender discrimination occurs include the devaluation of women's labor and their exploitation in poor working conditions. These societies harbor prejudices and stereotypes. As a result, this inequality becomes ingrained in our lives and is passed on to future generations. Women living in patriarchal societies often endure oppression. Girls are denied the right to education, while boys are educated. The family's property is typically recognized as the inheritance of male children (Topçuoğlu Atas, 2011, pp. 72-73).

From ancient times to the present day, the gender roles assigned to women have largely been restricted as a result of the advent of monotheistic religions, leading to the loss of a significant portion of women's rights and freedoms. Women's participation in education, society, and governance has been hindered. As a result, women have been the key to the development and progress of societies. The education, economic freedom, and personal freedom of women have been consistently restricted and hindered throughout history. Women's ability to improve and advance their lives has largely depended on the cultural structure, norms, and values attributed to them within the societies in which they live.

Communities that value and hold women in high regard have always laid the foundation for strong and successful civilizations. Equal and just societies where women have a say, have allowed women to participate in economic, social, and political life beyond the role of motherhood, thus established advanced civilizations.

On the contrary, societies that assigned women solely the roles of motherhood and companionship have, over time, seen their established orders and systems crumble, disappearing from the pages of history.

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